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FASCINATING WOMEN

EMPRESS THEODORA

FASCINATING WOMEN

sacred & profane

BY FRANZ BLEI

TRANSLATED BY S. GUY ENDORE

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Translated from the German

By S. Guy Endore

THE EMPRESS THEODORA

THE EMPRESS THEODORA

In this year, the five hundredth and forty-eighth since the birth of our Lord, I, Theophorus of Mytilene propose to set down here the life of that remarkable woman, the Empress Theodora. Of the events which I shall narrate, some I have been witness of myself, others have been communicated to me by reliable personages, while the remainder are matters of gossip, rumor and common knowledge. I leave it to the reader to draw herefrom what profit he may, and I leave it to him also to distinguish between truth and falsehood, according to his inclination or better knowledge, for that is beyond my province and beyond my powers. I begin.

In Byzantium there lived a certain Akakios who, during the administration of the autocrat Anastasius was in charge of the wild animals destined for the Arena. When he died, he left his wife with three young daughters, Komito, Theodora and Anastasia, of whom the eldest, Anastasia, was scarcely seven years of age. The widow, a Cyprian, had a lover whom she wished to see succeed to the position formerly occupied by her husband, and being opposed in this by the director of the Circus, she presented herself and her three children before the mob at the Hippodrome in order to force the director into compliance by the acclamations of the crowd. In this she was successful. Theodora was thus five years old at the time of her first appearance.

As soon as Anastasia had reached a nubile age, her mother put her on the stage, where she played panto-

mime parts accompanied by her younger sister Theodora attired as a little slave-girl in a shirt with short sleeves. Although Anastasia soon became much in demand as a courtesan, she still kept Theodora with her. When men visited Anastasia in her apartments at the theatre, Theodora remained in the hallway along with the visitor's slaves. She was too young to be a courtesan but she had other ways of satisfying the lust of the servants. . . .

Having reached pubescence she likewise appeared on the stage and became at once a noted courtesan, but of the kind known then as pedestrian. She had a quick wit and was full of fun, but she could play neither on the flute nor on the psalter nor could she dance. She lived among the mimes helping them with their performances and always aroused comment by her actions, for she was ready for any kind of horse play, allowed herself to be whipped and smacked, and assumed without shame the lewdest postures.

Theodora acquired great ascendency over lustful men. One smile showing her pretty teeth, a single wanton movement of her supple body, sufficed to arouse their lechery. But not only passionate men succumbed to her charms; everyone who crossed her path, even little children, were led astray.

No woman since Lilith had so completely surrendered to the demon of lust. It happened frequently that she went alone to a banquet where there was a crowd of healthy young men, and after a night given up to love, the next day found her seeking the slaves, long after the men's departure.

At the theatre the law forced her to wear at least a girdle, but Theodora had a trick whereby grains of wheat were so placed upon her body that trained geese picking

them off wrought scenes which caused the galleries to howl with delight.

At length a certain governor of Pentapolis, a Tyrian by the name of Hekebolos, developed such a liking for her, that he took her along when he was appointed to his post. It was said that she performed for him in a manner which does not permit of description here. They quarreled, however, and he dismissed her. She then went to Alexandria and there was constrained to earn her living on the streets as a common prostitute.

Everywhere she went, she practised in a way that soon caused all decent people to avoid the very mention of her name. This had happened in Byzantium, where it was then considered a bad sign to meet her on the street. She now had to wander from town to town, and thus she spread her evil reputation until there was scarcely a village in the Orient that did not know Theodora the whore. And everywhere, as formerly in Byzantium, good people soon fled from her as from the pest.

But at the very edge of the abyss, before her eternal soul was doomed forever, she was vouchsafed God's grace. Only those who of their own will unbosom themselves to the son of God, are truly good. For only the Lord can cleanse the unclean heart, and drive out the evil spirits.

The heart is like an inn, which is visited by evil men, who soil and ruin it, soon filling it with rubbish and excrement, having no respect for a place which they consider as belonging to any stranger. And when there is no one to take care of the heart, it soon becomes like such an inn, the home of all manner of unclean demons.

But when the Lord comes to stay, then the heart is cleansed and sparkles once more with light. He whose heart is thus radiant will be canonized and he shall behold the Lord.

Carried away by the arrogance of her wanton and evil lust, Theodora even attempted to ensnare a holy man who dwelt in the desert. But she was caught in her own net and she experienced a change of heart so that henceforth she could not look upon evil without shuddering. The Patriarch Severus of Antioch preached especially to fallen women, and Theodora became his most repentant convert.

Shortly thereafter she returned to Byzantium and retired to a small house where she wove linen all day as the Roman matrons used to do in the olden times. Of her former friends there was not one who would have recognized her, so completely had she changed, so chaste and so secluded was her mode of living. It was then that Justinian came to know her.

The love of the forty-year-old Justinian for Theodora has led some to suspect magical practices, but it is not likely that anything more was employed than the natural magic of woman, aided in this case by quick wit, cleverness and skill, and the fact that Justinian for all his talent was a weak-willed man.

Justinian succumbed completely to Theodora's gifts. As she was greedy, he showered wealth upon her. As she coveted titles and honors, he used his influence with his uncle the Emperor and had her made a Patrician. She wished to have power and to that end she prevailed upon Justinian to join her in all her intrigues. The good Emperor Justinus made no difficulties when Justinian took for his wife a former dancer and courtesan of the lowest rank. Only the Empress Euphemia, who as we know was herself of peasant origin like her Macedonian husband, did not think that it was fitting for Theodora to succeed her. But she died soon thereafter, that is, in the year 523. To

please his nephew, Justinus now altered a law and in the Hippodrome, where once she had been cheered as Theodora the whore, she was now received with shouts of joy as Theodora, the wife of Justinian. Before making her public appearance, she was crowned Basilissa at a festive ceremony at St. Sophia.

For that which I have related so far I have only the reputation of the witnesses who told it to me, but for that which follows my own eyes will answer, since at this time I entered her employ and remained therein until her death. The Augusta was thirty years old then, and so likewise was I, although I seemed much older on account of having been brutally robbed of my manhood when a boy. It was this circumstance that led her to entrust me with the education of her ten-year-old daughter, the child of an unknown father.

One of the privileges of my office was the permission to enter the private apartment of the Empress any time it was necessary. This I could do in spite of the ceremonies usually exacted by the Augusta in even the slightest matter. Thus I am able to speak with assurance when I declare that all the tales of the Augusta's amours are calumnious inventions. I can say that after her marriage to Justinian all her commerce, whether with man, woman or child, was chaste. It seemed indeed as though the devil of her lechery had been overfed, had burst and was completely gone out of her body.

She did much to relieve those unfortunate women who as dancers or courtesans lived upon the lewdness of the male, and whenever men came before her power she was hard and cruel, whether they approached her as guilty ones begging for mercy, as pleaders craving a boon, or merely in some official capacity. Whoever came into her

presence, no matter what his rank, was forced to abase himself before her and touch the ground with his mouth. She allowed no one to escape this ceremony.

Some have maintained that this cruelty amply supplanted the pleasure she had formerly received by giving them her body. Certainly she never ceased to care for herself as she had always done; she took much repose and had all the year 'round hot water in silver bowls at the foot of her bed.

In the matter of her meals she evinced similar luxurious tastes and had cooks from various foreign lands to please her palate with dainty preparations, such as had never before been seen at the court. In all this Justinian abetted her, although he was a simple man, eating only vegetables like one of the common people, and willing to listen and speak to anyone. But although an industrious and learned man, he had constantly to admire the mental ability and the will-power which the Empress displayed not only in important but also in the very smallest matters.

Possibly imperial dignity would only have been in his way, if he had assumed it while engaged in his many activities as scholar, diplomat and architect. Very likely it would have prevented him from carrying out his sincerest wishes. So it was only when the Augusta Theodora stood beside him shining like the sun in her imperial dignity, that he seemed like an Emperor indeed. Like the sun, Theodora gave Justinian not only light but also warmth, as was shown at the time of the great uprising.

Byzantium had broken out in turbulence and riots on account of the extortion of immense taxes. Half the city was in flames. A boat was hastily prepared to take the court and its treasures across the Bosphorus. Justinian went to the Hippodrome with the open Gospels in his arms to make a last appeal to the people. He was hooted

and pelted with excrement. The name of Honorius, a nephew of the Emperor Anastasius, began to resound in the streets. All of us were assembled in the garden which led to the sea and were ready to leave when Theodora spoke:

"Those who have worn the crown once, must never survive its loss. I hope never to see the day when I am no longer greeted as Basilissa. Flee, Cæsar, if you wish. You have money, the ships are ready, the sea lies free before you. As for myself, I like the old saying that the purple makes a pretty shroud."

Truly the empire was on the eve of disruption on that eighteenth of January of the year 532, and only the masculine courage of Theodora saved it. If until now she owed her place in the council to Justinian's weakness for her, she now assumed it on her own merits, and she kept her place; Justinian could not oppose her, and he even added her name to his, in all the inscriptions commemorating our victories over our enemies. The oath of allegiance was taken in her name as well as his. In the most important matters, Justinian asked the advice of his wife. He worshipped her, asserting that God had given her to him. A favorite expression of his was, "my honey-sweet magic."

As a matter of fact there was only one Augustus in Byzantium thereafter, and that was Theodora. She put her own devoted men in the executive offices, as well as in the secret service, the legislature and the church. Ministers, generals, patriarchs and popes, she made and unmade them according to her whim. Frequently it happened that she vetoed some edict of her husband's by proclaiming a contrary one.

In my opinion the Empress had a broader view of the trend of things than the Emperor, whose eyes were turned toward the past, toward the old empire of the Cæsars,

which he dreamt of reestablishing. His famous code, for instance, he gathered together out of the old laws. Theodora was quite the reverse. She had a keener, sharper eye, and looked not back into history, but out toward the East. From there came deputations which she received at court despite their disgusting rags and their coarse customs and speech. To her came the Syrian and Egyptian monks, Zooras and Jacob Baradeos.

Theodora was pious, as everyone was in Bzyantium, but she understood in addition the political necessity of paying strict attention to religious matters. The Basilissa realized that the actual strength of the empire lay not in the West but in the East, in the rich provinces of Asia and Egypt. She was aware of the great danger that lay in the growing number of religious factions, which she foresaw would eventually bring about secession of these states from the nation.

Theodora's policy was quite different from that of Justinian. The latter had a taste for theological disputes and thought perhaps to find similar subtle formulae to set up in religious matters as he had done in his code. It was like a game. Meanwhile Theodora grappled more directly with the problem. Thus for many years she kept heretical Egypt within the nation. Similarly she pacified the Syrians by securing for them permission to rebuild their own church. She managed it so that the Anti-Christians were not only allowed to preach again but even permitted to oppose the Pope's excommunication against them and withdraw themselves from secular jurisdiction.

The adherents to the doctrine of the divine personality of Christ have her to thank for the fact that they were able to carry their messages as far as black Nubia and the brown sons of the Arabian deserts. Some people insisted that she herself believed in the purely divine nature

of Christ, a notion which they formed out of the fact that her former life as a prostitute would not allow her to think of the Redeemer as a human being and a man. Such a belief would have altered His godly countenance into the hateful features which she carried in her memory of men as she had known them.

Perhaps such a notion is not totally without foundation. It is true that Theodora, despite her great political activity, never ceased to be a sly and cruel woman who could take pleasure in deposing and locking up one Pope, and bringing another so completely within her power that he followed her about like a puppy dog.

The Church may, if it wishes, continue to damn her because she favored the heretics and mistreated the Popes, Silverius and Vigilius. It is not within my province to judge her as a Christian, for I too adhered to her belief in the single nature of Christ simply because it was hers and I agreed with her reasons without testing them for myself. It is, however, in accordance with my task and my position at court to say that as Empress of this great nation she acted correctly. If she had been merely pious, then she would not have been Augusta. Her duty was to preserve an empire.

The incident which I shall now relate is not of great importance, but it does bring out sharply the peculiar traits of the Empress. Official scandal-mongers informed her that the Emperor had a mistress who entertained ambitions beyond the occasional sharing of the Emperor's bed. The name of this woman was Edita. She was of Northern extraction and a rare beauty. She had jet-black hair and eyes the color of Baltic amber. She was moreover somewhat taller than the Empress and in addition ten years younger.

The Augusta persuaded Edita to spend a night with

her and communicate to her the arts she practised. Theodora wished to learn what this woman knew and whether she were worthy of an Emperor's sport.

Early in the morning I was called by the Empress to the ante-chamber of her bedroom. She raised a curtain and showed me the exhausted girl, asleep.

"She is just the same as everybody else, and not worthy of amusing the Master. You may have her for your slave, or you may throw her into the Bosphorus, as you choose."

That was the end of that except for the destiny of those three who had prepared Edita for presentation to the Augustus, and who had even gone so far as to assure her that she was the Emperor's beloved. These three, two men and a woman, were turned over to Andronikos the executioner and an hour later had neither hands to plead for mercy nor eyes to weep over their terrible fate.

In this not unusual case the Empress pronounced two verdicts which were certainly just although it would be hard to justify them legally. The Augusta was never carried away by temporary emotion, but she was always ruled by her deep-seated hatred. Germanus, the Emperor's nephew, and the secretary Priscus had occasion to feel the power of her hate, and, as she demonstrated with the Prefect John of Cappadocia, she never lacked the means of carrying out her will, once she had reasons for wishing to dispose of anyone.

Only one, Belisarius, the great general, the truest and most disinterested servant any master ever had, seemed to elude her power. He served his master directly, acting as though the Augusta did not exist. But the Empress managed to gain the upper hand over him in the following fashion:

Theodora made a friend out of Antonina, the wife of Belisarius, by protecting her life against the anger not only

of her husband but also of several of her lovers. For Antonina seemed to have taken up that life which Theodora had abandoned. She thus became as truly subject to Theodora as though she had been a slave manumitted by the Empress. And for the sake of Theodora's protection Antonina was willing to betray Belisarius.

For all that, Antonina was clever and so skillful that she could turn the impossible into the possible. Belisarius really loved her, and due to Theodora's mediation he was often reconciled to his wife and persuaded to forgive her. Thus he became as dependent upon Theodora as any person in the realm, and yet he did not cease to serve his one master, the Emperor.

Theodora's anger finally struck him. True, his estate was soon returned to him and his exile was cut short, but Belisarius would not draw out the dagger from the wound and his death followed soon.

Theodora was known to all as "the faithful Empress," and there was no title she deserved more. She was only forty when she died, and that was many years ago. Yet whenever the old, lonesome Emperor wishes to make a solemn promise, he does so in the name of Theodora. Those who wish to move the Emperor always remind him of her and speak of the exquisite, wise and beautiful consort who now prays for him in Paradise.

I have been sent here to the Imperial palatinate of Ravenna, in order to execute a mural of the Emperor and the Empress upon the wall of the Basilica of Apollinaris. As usual, people have had more faith in my talent than I myself possess.

An undertaking cannot be fully completed by anyone whose heart is not perfectly clean, and God forgive me, mine is not. Still I have had to obey, and so here I have come with my three apprentices who know how to set

the colored stones on the outline which I sketch with red clay.

On the second day, late in the afternoon, as I sat upon the scaffolding and pondered upon the right proportions, a man of strange appearance and demeanor suddenly mounted the ladder and without saying a word examined the paper upon which I had drawn the portraits to scale. He was a thin, yellow man with hollow cheeks and straight, black hair which hung down to his shoulders, and he was clad extremely poorly in the manner of the Egyptian monks. His big, blood-shot eyes, burning with a feverish flame, stared at my poor picture of Theodora in Paradise, and he cried with his mouth distorted in scorn: "So you think that Paradise is inhabited by such creatures as these. No, I tell you! Such as these burn in the black fires of Gehenna until Doomsday, and upon Judgment Day they are cast into even deeper hells!"

My mouth felt as if it were sealed before the torrent of violent imprecations which the man let loose against the Empress. "She was the great Babylonian whore," he said, "the sink of all iniquities and all corruption. She allied our sweet Lord Jesus Christ with her sins in that she pretended to serve him by the sins she committed." My flesh crept. It became very dark in the vaulted church. He raised his voice: "Damned be she, thrice damned, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Suddenly he was gone, as though swallowed up in the darkness which wrapped itself around me like a black cloth. My apprentices appeared with lights and led me to the inn. I did not mention a word of it to them.

I had not drawn as yet a single stroke, yet the next day I beheld with astonishment that the blank wall was covered with a portrait of Theodora, our Empress. This I felt

was undoubtedly the work of the stranger, for it resembled his description of her.

She was naked except for the little loin cloth of the dancers. She stood erect, her arms in back of her, and her knees slightly bent, in an attitude that she had formerly loved to assume in the circus, when it could always be depended upon to rouse the mob to such a pitch of excitement as no other evil posture could. Around this shameless figure of a prostitute, the artist had drawn vivid scrolls formed of hellish animals and plants, commingled, in the disgusting fashion of the ancients.

It took me many hours of tiresome labor to scratch it off the wall, and even then I did not succeed in removing every trace of it. My apprentices were constantly confusing their work with the other's devilish design, which showed through the one I had drawn above it. Now that the painting is finished, I note with horror that, out of the purity of my work, the hell-fire of that other still burns.

I am only an old man and know nothing. I do not know whether it was God or the devil who visited me that evening and who, with his ineradicable verdict of eternal damnation denied my pious wish for the poor dead Empress. There are some who say that woman will always be the devil's mate, no matter in what guise she appears. May the Lord Jesus Christ take pity on her. Amen.

THREE MEDALLIONS

PARISINA MALATESTA

A MINIATURE in the British museum has preserved for us the childlike features, the transparent skin and the full red lips of this wayward maiden who became the bride of the widower Nicolo III of the house of Este, lord of Ferrara. In the city there were three hundred bastards who called him father. Six of them lived like princes in the castle which was fortress, prison and cloister. Here personal merit counted for more than legitimate birth. Even before the duke married the Malatesta it had been definitely decided and everything had been arranged so that the Bastard Ugo should succeed his father as ruler.

Nicolo was a miser. His son Borso had nothing but rags. Meliaduro had not a stitch to his name. But Nicolo was mad about Ugo. He would give him such expensive gifts as a string of horses, and even his young stepmother gave him a pack of hounds. Whenever Ugo wished to take a walk in Ravenna, Nicolo would slip twenty ducats into the lad's pocket.

For this era, when the military hirelings were kings, Ugo had a highly unmartial appearance. In fact, with his tight waist, his corset and his woman's cloak, he looked very much like a girl dressed up as a page.

Parisina, the stepmother, was twenty years old when she first fell in love with Ugo. She was bored to death with this old castle whose stones were wet by the slimy green Po, and she came near to throwing gold from the window out of sheer tedium. When the mood seized her to redecorate the house she did it with a lavishness hitherto

unknown to Italy. Hers was the only bedchamber in the country whose walls were covered with silk. Her stable was the best, her hounds had the purest pedigree, her falcons were famous. She insisted that her parrot, a bird then very rare in Europe, be treated as one of the nobility. Food for it was sent up specially from Venice. Mantegna designed for her personal use a pack of playing cards in blue and gold enamel. She was an inveterate gambler. She hired one of the most noted companies of actors, secured an orchestra of the finest musicians, and as she was an exceptionally talented performer on the theorbo, she herself played with them.

Parisina was twenty; Ugo was nineteen. Duke Nicolo was generally away in Padua, in Venice or somewhere on the roads between these cities. When at last he did come home, it was not usually to see his wife. He wished to be a father to his country and that demanded much of his time.

One could easily weary of music and there was not always an abundance of ducats for the card-table. Conversation with the parrot was too monosyllabic.

In the evening when the swampy river was exhaling its noxious vapors it was Parisina's custom to shut herself up in the library and read in Nicolo's rich collection. She remembered that Francesca and Paolo had sinned while reading about Lancelot and Guinevere. Parisina read the tale of Tristan and Iseult over and over again.

In 1436 Giovanni di Piero catalogued the duke's books, and so we know that he had a copy of Ovid's *Art of Love*. But he did not read books, or he might have consoled himself with Cicero's book *On Duties*, or with Seneca's *Prudence and Clemency* or with Boëthius' *Consolations of Philosophy*, or he might have looked into one of his three

copies of Merlin's *Predictions* and seen that all that which comes, must come.

But it was not from Merlin's *Predictions* that he learned the truth, nor was it of *The Consolations of Philosophy* that he thought as he chewed furiously the knob of his field-marshal's baton. And when he was told that his order against Ugo had been executed he howled with rage and ordered that his own head be stricken off now that Ugo was dead.

For unfortunately Parisina had revealed her happiness in love to one of her maids of honor. Out of revenge for a slap, the latter told it to her lover, a certain Giacomo Rubino, who went at once to his master. The duke would believe only his own eyes. A hole was drilled in the ceiling of the room and thus Nicolo confirmed the ugly tale.

It was a warm May evening of the year 1424. No sooner was the duke satisfied as to the truth of the illicit love than he ordered the pair thrown into irons. All the nobility of Ferrara pleaded in vain for Ugo. These virile men of a man's era cared little for the woman's fate. On the very same evening the execution was carried out. Ugo fell first. Parisina threw herself upon her dead lover's body, and lay there all covered with his blood, while the executioner struck at her with his axe.

RENÉE OF FRANCE

When people began to unearth classical sculpture from the soil of Italy and the cultivation of man's intellect flourished again, the springs of religious life, which had flowed copiously in the middle ages, dried up. Without effort and without social upheaval the immense and cumbersome tradition was surrendered. The pendulum swung over to complete indifference. The Italian heretics had always remained within the church, and the people now saw no good reason for quitting it.

The Reformation made converts here and there in Italy, but there is no historical trace of a national Protestantism such as occurred in France, Germany and England. Italian spirit, or rather wit, soon finished what was left after that hangman, the Theatin Pope, Paul IV, had done. Among those who reserved the right to commune with God by direct inspiration and continued nevertheless to go to mass, there was no doubt much hypocrisy, but absolutely no religious heroism.

Still another circumstance combined to explain the impotence and the hesitation of those Italians who felt the urge to be apostles. Italy really expected the reform of Christianity to proceed from the Papal throne. This reform had been preached by Savonarola from the height of his Florentine pulpit and both Leo IX and Paul III had placed their hopes on it. In the early days, Paul IV had honestly declared and really believed that the council of Trent would fulfill this hope. And there was finally the expectation that the Protestant Church and the

Renée of France

Mother Church would become reconciled and Rome once more be leader of a United Christianity.

The vacillating mood of the period is typified by Renée of France, a little rachitic figure from Brittany, driven from the North to the South by life's tempest and orphaned in the matter of her religious emotions, much like a child unable to tell which of two women is the real and which the stepmother. There were many then who stood at the crossroads, and all of those who decided for Wittenberg or Geneva were heartbroken at the thought that they must leave Rome, while those who turned towards Rome wept tears and despaired when they looked to the North and thought of the evangelistic doctrines.

Renée of France was the daughter of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany. She combined a womanly heart full of generosity with a manly political intellect. Her blue, almond-shaped eyes protruded slightly and gave a melancholy expression to her fair and rather long face. She combed her blond hair modestly, straight back, and half-hid it beneath her white hood.

Early in life she became an orphan, and her education was entrusted to the scholar, Lefèvre d'Estaples, who had also been the tutor of the third son of Francis I. The lively group at the court of Louise of Savoy, among whom Rabelais was frequently numbered, completed her childhood training. This frivolous court, given up to sensuality, paid no attention to the little listening girl, and thought only of finding her a husband and getting rid of her.

Her first fiancé was Gaston de Foix, who lost his life before the walls of Ravenna. Don Carlos, the future Charles V, was thought of, then his brother Ferdinand was considered, then the son of the Archduke of Brandenburg, the heir to the throne of Savoy, then the Constable of Bourbon, finally the King of Portugal. Even Henry

VIII of England, his mind on the acquisition of Brittany, thought of Renée. The busy marriage bureau closed down finally when the prize was awarded to the son of Alfonso of Ferrara and Lucretia Borgia.

The marriage festival lasted a week, in the course of which eighty Huguenots were burned and Berquin was strangled. These were the first flames in the rising civil-religious wars. During the night of the wedding some sacrilegious hand broke off the head from a Madonna in the Jew's Street.

The nephew of Alexander VI, exhausted from so much eating, drinking and dancing, urged that the voyage home be begun. There was feasting and the singing of Te Deums in every city they passed through. In Modena the news reached them of a murderous assault against the Duke Alfonso. It was currently said that the act had originated with Pope Clement VII, who was not pleased at the alliance of the house of Este with France.

Renée reached Ferrara in the depths of winter, December 1528. "The ravens cry night and day," one of her ladies wrote home to Paris. "We are bitten to death by gnats and fleas." Moreover the pest was raging in the city. Half the inhabitants had left. The other half was forced by ducal edict, and by the imposition of fines and punishments, to dress in fancy costumes and make merry. The carnival season was approaching and the pest aroused the Ferrarese to feverish merriment. When that failed to act as a prod, a Spanish buffoon mounted the back of a dromedary and performed the most amusing antics.

Professedly Duchess Renée was a Catholic. As such she thought it her duty to protect and help the Lutherans and the Calvinists fleeing from the Emperor or from his most Christian Majesty. She sent away to Chartres for two shirts like those which the holy Virgin had worn. Her

father confessor was a Dominican from Rome. She wore the penitential girdle formerly worn by Franciscus of Paula. In these actions she never surrounded herself with secrecy. At the Ducal court she was well-known as the protectress of all Protestant exiles and it is very likely that she carried her efforts in their behalf as far as the Inquisition, perhaps even to Rome.

Even prior to the Treaty of Augsburg she seems to have understood very clearly the political nature of the Reformation, and to have acted accordingly. The adherents of the new religion were enemies of the Holy Roman Empire, of Spain and of the Pope, and none of these was a friend of France. Surrounded by the all too free Church of Rome and further dismayed by the memory of her stepmother Lucretia, who was the daughter of a Pope, her heart inclined toward the severe religion. She did not, however, attempt to transform the towering cathedral of Ferrara into a Protestant church, but remained an Italian duchess and a Catholic. Even after her return to France she did not change to Calvinism without many hours of doubt and vacillation.

Although the duke was not a bad-natured man, he was often driven to violent action by his wife's excessive charitable zeal. Once he was forced to exile her to Consandola in the poisonous delta of the Po and later he surrendered her to an ecclesiastical trial. Her Calvinistic books were burned and she herself was shut up as insane in one of the towers of the old Ferrarese castle.

She gave in on every occasion, atoned, confessed, went to communion, and listened attentively to the Jesuit sent by Ignatius himself. Calvin had severe things to say about her, such as that she had backslid out of fear and that steadfastness was not a quality to be found among the great. The envoy from Venice,—and the Republic was

always known for its excellent observers,—was rather of the opinion that her relapse was just a blind to pull the wool over her husband's and Loyola's eyes.

Still the envoy was probably mistaken in this case. This vacillating woman was not one to play the hypocrite. Her teetering was the bitter fruit of the disappointment caused by the realization that it was impossible to win Italy over to the sterner faith. Then again she was tormented by her own soul's uncertainty as to just what was required of her. She was not, as Calvin's old confidante Olympia Morata used to say, a shallow giddy creature. It was probably the noble-minded Vittoria Colonna, a great friend of Renée's, who kept awake in the Breton princess the hope that the Protestants would end by returning to the Church of Rome.

Toward the end of the year 1560, Renée returned to France to live at the castle Montargis. The poet Clément Marot, who had once fled to her for protection, has described her life there as that of a lily among thorns.

She was in Paris on the night of St. Bartholomew.

On June 15, 1574, she died firmly uttering her creed: "the true God in three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." Her vacillating soul, which had struggled so hard to reach God, gave final permission to the Genevan Calvin to open the doors of heaven. She really needed his harsh words. The voice of Rome had always seemed too mild for the severity of Renée of France.

MARIA FELICE ORSINI

It may seem artificial and far-fetched to reach the grace and beauty of Maria Felice Orsini by traversing the tedious pages of that once famous and now so insipid five-volume novel written by Honoré d'Urfé. Still, there lies the shortest path through that fairy land, once so eagerly sought and admired, where Celadon and Astré, Hylas and Silvandre had nothing to do but love and examine their sensitive hearts, intoxicating themselves with delicate descriptions of their emotions.

Astré and Celadon require five volumes to clear up the misunderstanding that separates them. What a waste of time! How fabulous and strange it all seems to us, for whom nothing is too fast. But it was exactly that which delighted the contemporaries of the gentilhomme de lettres, Honoré d'Urfé. His attempt to refine the coarse love of the period, and bring a sweet peace to the turbulence of the time, was really a most daring innovation.

The frigidity of French politeness was tempered by a little Italian sunshine. Chilled, delicate souls expanded in its beautiful light. Without Astré they might never have known of the existence of this new emotional warmth. It was women coming out of Italy who completed the grace of the French. One of these was the twelve-year-old Maria Felice Orsini who came to France in the retinue of the Medicis and united her southern elegance to the proudest French aristocracy, Henri de Montmorency, a marvelously brave and chivalrous warrior, with curly blond hair and lace over his armor. He looked like the faithful shepherd. He was madly in love with his child wife. As for her, she

piously pleaded with her husband not to accompany her to mass, insisting that his beauty distracted her from her religious duty. He, however, could not stay away from her a single moment.

The young duchess could dance as well as a Parisienne, but she took no pleasure in the *pavane* unless she was dancing with her duke. She was a graceful, delicate girl with a nose as fine as white jade, so fine that one could see the sun gleam through it. She had a kind, generous heart and was lively and intelligent. Montmorency, aware of her fondness for converting people and turning enemies into friends, used to ask her: "My dear heart, to whom did you preach to-day?"

Under the trees of Chantilly she lived out her idyl of love and friendship. Her praises were sung by poets, among them some wild fellows like Théophile, who found a sanctuary in her home where the arm of the Paris executioner could not reach him. He called her Sylvia and said of her that her glance was enough to make anyone cease cursing at once. Honoré d'Urfé made of her his sublime ideal of love and heroism.

She had come to France to teach the higher pleasures of life. France in return taught her the higher sorrows. But her immeasurable love made her bear up under her misfortune like a true heroine. When Montmorency was betrayed by the miserable Gaston and decapitated for high treason, Sylvia, the nymph of the Chantilly forest, became a nun in the ascetic order of the Holy Chantal. Now God found a place in the heart of the Ursuline sister, beside the place of her beloved Henri. She lived for many long years, frequently visited by her husband's betrayer, whose appearances she bore as though they were a sacrifice she made to God. She let him speak. She herself never spoke a word.

Maria Felice Orsini

SAINT THERESA

SAINT THERESA

It is the duty of the Church to unite all mankind under the banner of the true faith. This duty necessitates on the part of the Church officials a caution which often gives the effect of a compromise policy, for mankind will not brook excessive rigorism. It revolts against the imposition of heavenly perfection. History furnishes us with numerous examples of sects and individuals who attempted to spread an over-literal interpretation of the Word of God, and against whom the Church was frequently compelled to battle with fire and sword.

Still the Church cannot completely disavow these heroic figures who attempted the impossible life of a perfect Christian. They furnished the spice to a dish that often threatened to become stale. The blood of martyrs in fact has always redounded to the glory of the Church. Amid the banal and the commonplace she tends to wither and decay and it is then that extraordinary figures emerge to regenerate her. Nevertheless it is only after much protest that she consents to incorporate the unusual within the body of her doctrines.

The Church is like a rule which needs to be proved again and again by exceptions, even though each new exception threatens at first to bring the whole structure to ruin.

The Catholic conception of sanctity varies. The Church has never undertaken to define it once and for all. In our day the energy of the Church expends itself mostly in administrative efforts and only very slightly in creative

work; accordingly it might prefer to recognize as signs of sanctity a humble God-fearing existence, one as inconspicuous as possible and relieved by only a very few unostentatious miracles.

The Church would be astounded if any one suggested that she canonize Sir Charles Gordon, the Christian hero of Khartoum. For nowadays she is no longer quite sure of even her most heroic figures, as a thesis by the Jesuit Hahn demonstrates. Hahn believes that a large number of St. Theresa's most remarkable utterances are to be ascribed to intense emotional hysteria. The poverty of the arguments presented in a refutation by another Jesuit, Louis de San, is none the less surprising, although it is quite characteristic of contemporary Catholics who will make enthusiastic pilgrimages to a place where a wonder-working servant girl causes pots and pans to fly about in the kitchen, but who refuse to recognize a saint in Léon Bloy, the Catholic who died a few years ago.

Modern democracy has no doubt saved the life of the Church considered mainly as an industrial institution, one which enables millions of officials to earn their daily bread; but at the same time democracy has blunted the intensity of the Church, destroyed her breadth of vision, and dragged her down to a spiritual level barely adequate to the most common-place events of the religious life.

In Catholic Christendom two women have played outstanding rôles. One was an Italian, the other a Spaniard. Both were as trying to the Church as the Church was to them. Catherine, the little Tuscan nun, rejected confinement within the cloister walls. She threw herself into those apparently interminable Italian revolts and resolutely grasped the helm of the ship riding pilotless in the storm.

This was the Italy abandoned by Pope and Emperor, and disclosed to the sympathy of the world by the pen of

THE ECSTASY OF ST. THERESA

Dante. Catherine's political insight saw the danger that the further stay of the legitimate Pope in Avignon, and the continuance of the schismatic anti-pope in Rome, held not only for Italy but for all Christendom. It was her tears and prayers that brought Gregory XI back to the apostolic seat.

To a certain extent she knew the transports of mysticism. A pathetic picture by Sodoma represents her during one of the most famous of these moments. His white-clad ecstatic nun, however, lying prostrate at the foot of the altar, is a reduction of a figure possessing a powerful will and a passionate mentality, to a stricken creature in the throes of sensual and transcendental mysticism; and is quite far from the real and essential Catherine.

It was in Spain that the second of these great women crusaders arose. With the second Philip, Spain enjoyed a period of peace. Under a succession of ascetic Popes absorbed in the business of self-discipline, the former vigilance of the Church weakened. No reformers arose to stir the sleeping herd out of its lethargy. The discipline of the convents relaxed and Spanish Christendom, so heroic in its battles against the Arabs, fell defeated by the bright stream of gold pouring into the country from the newly discovered provinces.

The pomp of courtly life, the flaunting of empty arrogance and sensuality were paralyzing the life of the soul. The close relations with Italy brought an influx of frivolous cavaliers from Naples and Milan, and in many a convent through the grating of the reception room eager hands seized scented missives containing assignations for noctural escalades over the walls.

Here was work for a Christian. It became the life task of the holy Theresa to restore the ivory tower as the refuge

of Christian purity. To accomplish this despite the interference and opposition of her superiors required all the energy of her spirit and all the strength of her weak body, which she vitalized with the tireless dynamo of her will.

St. Theresa was born in a little walled citadel of old Castile in the year 1515. To-day, Avila stands, as ever, perched on its rocky cliffs, with its mad jumble of mediaeval strongholds, its towers of granite, its nine towering gates and its fortified cathedral. The city is empty and unchanged. Nearby to the south rises the yellow rocky Sierra de Gredos, sparsely settled with semi-savages. Here the winters are long and bitterly cold. And no spring intervenes before the scorching hot summer rushes in to wither all things.

Avila was at one time a border city against the Mohammedan enemies. Once when the men were away on an expedition, the women successfully repulsed an attack. Their leader in this splendid defense was Ximena Blasces, and she and her descendants were honored therefore with the privilege of a seat and a vote in the city council.

At the time of the Moorish occupation, Avila was famous for its knightly gallantry. In a later era, when the politics of Charles V and his son had accustomed the Grandees to a peaceful life, there remained but three careers open to the poor Hidalgo—the Church, commerce or Court service. It was then that the Avilese, thirsting for the heroic, were forced to find in the wild religious spirit of their time a loophole for self-expression. The blows which their fathers dealt to the enemies with swords, they now gave to themselves with knotted whips. *"Avila cantos y santos,"* was the way people spoke of the rock-ribbed town: *Avila, nothing but stones and saints.*

Theresa's father, Alfonso Sanchez de Cepeda, numbered among his ancestors a king of Leon. Her mother, Beatrix

Davila de Ahumada, was of the old Castilian nobility. The term *limpieza,* or racial purity, applied to families who had preserved themselves from Jewish or Moorish taint, was considered an important social factor at this time, and those aspiring to even the slightest political office had to be able to prove this freedom from mixture on both the paternal and the maternal sides.

As a Carmelite nun, Theresa had no respect for the *limpieza.* To her it seemed foolish to quarrel over what kind of earth would make the best bricks. Yet she could modify the rigor of this abstract principle when speaking of a woman as "in every way the true daughter of a nobleman."

Alfonso de Cepeda was pious, severe, masterful, given to the reading of instructive and uplifting literature. He was a Christian in the sense that he kept no slaves, gave alms to the poor and treated his servants decently. Following the Moorish tradition, he kept his wife and daughters locked up in his house and took care that they received no male visitors. Contrary to the custom of the time, however, he had his daughters instructed in the arts of reading and writing. He gave them religious books to study and had them come to him and tell him what they had read and learned.

There were twelve children living at home. Three of these, two sons and one daughter, came from an earlier marriage. The remaining nine, consisting of seven sons and two daughters, were the children of Beatrix de Ahumada. At fifteen, a delicately beautiful creature full of grace and spirit, she was married. At thirty-three she died of exhaustion. She was still young when she began to dress like an old lady and to keep to her room while her eldest daughter took care of the household.

Though weakened, her body was not sickly and her

room was full of life. She read voraciously not only the books which her husband had passed upon, but in preference those which were hidden away on the top shelves of the book-case. Romances of chivalry, picaresque tales, lays of troubadours—all these she read and passed on to her children. Thus she added to and relieved the characteristics which their father tried to instil. From him came piety and strength of will, from herself joy, laughter, fancy and excitement.

Thus the children grew up. One son has left no historical trace. One became a monk. The other seven boys became soldiers and went to America. At that time America was the land of marvels, where one met the kind of adventures which filled the pages of the romances. Charles V forbade these romances by law, while in secret he read the exploits of Don Belianis of Graecia. Under Philip, the Cortes demanded that these books be burnt because they led young girls astray. Of course the order was never carried out. The contemporaries of Pizarro and Cortez had stories to tell that were too interesting to be burnt. One could hardly destroy a literature which the people felt was telling them the truth.

One of Theresa's brothers died on the shores of the Rio de la Plata. Another amassed a fortune in Peru. A third, his mind weakened by the violences of battle, came home an idiot. A fourth went through seventeen encounters in Chile. And similarly with the rest. Of the three sisters, two became good, pious wives of excellent men.

But the third became a saint.

A contemporary described Theresa as a majestic brunette. She had inherited her mother's joyfulness and loveliness and with these she was enabled to accomplish more with refractory nuns than would ever have been possible by mere discipline and severity. This same contemporary

assures us that in her presence one would laugh even on the way to the stake.

Once, when she was already old and famous, she took up her residence in a nunnery where, according to reports, the inmates were sad and bored. She arrived, was full of good humor, quickly relaxed the severity of the penances, and soon had everybody in the convent happy.

Theresa was well-built and graceful, and she moved with a light tread. Her brown skin was clear and smooth. She blushed easily. Her round black eyes protruded slightly, glittering with life and laughter. Her nose was small and button-like, her mouth ordinary, the lower lip projecting just a bit. And she had two beautiful rows of white teeth, which she revealed in her constant, hearty and open laughter. Three little moles on her left cheek enhanced the coquetry of her person.

She had long white hands of which she took great care. Her voice was low and warm, her movements soft, easy and rounded. She had an excessively lively imagination, which she restrained from headlong flight by reflection and meditation. Though she had great respect for learning and knowledge, she did not allow herself to be deceived by a display of either. She abhorred superficial knowledge and was attracted by plain common-sense even when found in a completely uneducated person.

As a child she watched her brothers, armor-clad, practising military exercises in the court below. She thought the lives of the saints, which her father gave her to read, were fully as marvelous as those romances of chivalry so admired by her mother. She too longed to do something extraordinary, but just what, she had no idea. Her forehead flushed, her hair falling about her head in a wild tangle, she would sit and dream.

When she was scarcely seven she persuaded her eleven-

year-old brother Rodriguez to go out with her to fight the Moors in order to suffer martyrdom. Fortunately an uncle met them on the way and brought them back to Avila. Rodriguez excused himself, saying, "Nina dragged me along." But Theresa, the Nina, defended her actions. She had only wanted to go to God. And she knew she had taken the right way because she had read all about it in the religious books.

When she was fourteen years old she fell in love with one of her cousins. He, as well as several other relatives, was permitted to enter the house, and all of them used to sit at her feet and listen to her, for she knew how to make the conversation interesting, as she herself tells us in her Autobiography, reproaching herself for this sinful ability.

Theresa had her years of coquetry. She adorned and perfumed herself. Once again she led brother Rodriguez into a scheme. This time it was in the devil's service, not God's. The two of them wrote a romance of chivalry and love, which circulated from hand to hand and delighted all Avila.

Don Alfonso, now a widower, felt himself unable to manage this extremely eccentric girl, and made short shrift of the matter by putting her into the boarding-school of a convent. To Theresa it seemed like a prison. With fair words, the well-brought-up nun in charge succeeded in calming the girl, who consoled herself with small tasks, but could not be made to overcome her horror of nuns and nunneries.

Her keen mind refused to accept the notion that blood and wounds were demanded by God whose Son had pledged Himself with blood and wounds. The God of these Spaniards was as flinty as the soil of their land, and as austere as their customs. He was not the kind Father whose children are all brothers; he was a despot ruling

over slaves. Velasquez painted four deformed creatures to delight a king. Many concurred in the opinion of Menendez y Pelayo, that: "our spilled blood and limbs cut in pieces will reach God's presence."

The Christian God of these Spaniards demanded a great deal of those who put their faith in Him, and they took the matter very seriously. One devoted himself to Him, when one, as St. Theresa says, had a well-founded hope of ultimate success, otherwise it was best to leave it alone. He to whom God has given a sign and a helping hand, will find no better support and no truer friendship. But there must really be such a selection by God, for then only will the sacrifices be favorably received. Whereas, where there has been no sign from God, all sacrifices are worthless.

The Spanish mysticism of Luis of Granada and Juan of Avila grew secretly for fear of the Inquisition and found expression in a whole literature, made up of thousands of books, both poetry and prose.

When she was seventeen, Theresa's father removed her from the cloister and took her out into the world. It was here that she came to her decision, not there. To the major reasons for her choice of calling were now added several minor ones.

Whether considered as part of the Church Militant, or as one of the visionary mystics, Theresa of Cepeda is a unique and incomparable character. Her sainthood rests wholly upon individual peculiarities. She had not the sort of soul that intellectually works its painful way up to a vague and indifferent God, such as the one conceived by Porphyry or Plotinus. Theresa never lost or destroyed herself in her repeated, confused and dazzling visions. She achieved only complete peace, as though her whole being had been illuminated by a strong spiritual light. She herself tells us that she never imagined stories

such as are produced by an exalted fancy, wherein one thinks one sees that of which one is thinking and which is after all nothing but a form of self-deception. Nor did she ever have what are termed "hallucinations."

She repeats again and again: "I never saw anything with my corporeal eyes." Her visions, she claims, were "purely intellectual." She writes: "Our Lord Jesus Christ is as near to me, as if I saw Him with my own eyes. Our Lord is made present in my soul by a knowledge clearer than the sun. At that moment when the soul is engaged with things remote from the unusual then suddenly the blessed Jesus appears to us and fills our souls with joyful peace.

"When St. Paul fell down on the road to Damascus, there was a terrible storm in the air. The soul is like a world within us and a mighty movement courses through it, but only for a moment; then heavenly quiet pervades it. The soul is then taught the most marvellous wisdom, in so strange a fashion that it no longer requires the instruction of a teacher. He who is true Wisdom enables the soul thus to grasp wisdom and to understand it." And thus spake the Lord to His handmaiden: "And then the voice of God, though it cannot be heard by the ear, is perceived by the soul even more distinctly than if it were made audible. He who refused to hear would do so in vain."

A sickly world is prone to see a sick person in a saint. We consider ourselves normal, whereas in reality none of us, except the saint, is without some affliction. The saint is the only truly and perfectly healthy human being. His health is indeed so perfect that we are led to think it is illness, because our own sickness seems to us so very natural. As a matter of fact using our own malady as a norm, we have created some saints according to it; but

these have never been anything but poor weaklings who, losing themselves, could not attain God.

In spite of her father's violent opposition, Theresa maintained her resolution to take the veil. She used to say that God drew her. We should like to add that the world drove her. True, Theresa was not at all the cloister type. All her capabilities, bodily, spiritually and intellectually, were on a much higher plane of activity. She was absolutely afraid of the physical torture which the monastic rules imposed. And the compulsory repetition of prayers was as tedious to her as the religious books.

On the other hand, with her independent spirit what had she to expect in the world? A man, to command her instant obedience. For outside of marriage there was absolutely no place for a girl of her type and position in society. She chose to be the bride of God. A contemporary, one Catherine of Sendoval, declared openly that it was degrading to submit to a man, and she went into the convent to avoid such submission.

Early in the morning of November second, 1553, when she was no more than eighteen years old, Theresa arose and dragged herself to the Carmelite Convent Incarnacion outside the walls of Avila. "I felt as though every bone in my body had detached itself," she reports of this painful journey. But every vestige of pain left her the moment she had donned her novitiate's dress. She was flooded with happiness and exclaimed: "I am not yet twenty, and already I feel as though the conquered world lay at my feet."

This early excitement calmed down and there ensued a strange quietness which lasted for twenty years. For twenty years Theresa led the commonplace life of a good nun. She disliked the wearisome prayers and longed for

the bell which would permit her to return to her favorite occupation, the constant cleaning of walls and floors. This form of amusement she retained even in the days when she had become a famous reformer. She then constantly urged the provincial of the order to adopt as part of his constitution the rule that the monks must wash themselves and keep clean, though she realized, as she never failed to add, that it would not change the monks much.

Calderón has a poor hidalgo say that he is putting his daughter into a convent in order to avoid disgracing her noble blood. In his eyes poverty is a crime. If, however, the nun's lover should be discovered scaling the walls with a rope ladder, it would be an unfortunate circumstance, but it would bring no disgrace to a noble family. The convent was just another kind of social institution.

If we take into consideration the morals of the period we are likely to be surprised that the convents did not become more sinful and vicious abodes than they actually were. The reported cases of scandalous conditions in some French and Italian convents of this period are extremely rare occurrences and by no means the rule.

Still, the visitor's grating was rarely in evidence, and many a convent window opened upon the world. Cells were easily changed into boudoirs, and the hedges in the gardens made excellent places for secret rendezvous. A contemporary of Theresa's writes in her diary, with enchanting ingenuousness, of a conversation which she had with her pious abbess. The latter was sorry that she had to reduce her friend to "the clean and immaterial pleasures of platonic love."

It may sound paradoxical to call the convents of this era places of freedom, but so they proved to be for a great number of girls and women, to whom life in the world could have meant only lonely old maidenhood,

poverty, marriage beneath themselves, or prostitution.

Such a use of the convents was not without a weakening effect on the rules of the order. Yet it brought with it many advantages. This semi-worldliness kept out the stuffy atmosphere of the world and the poor, worried creatures who delight to live in it. The convents attracted not only those who had experienced misfortunes, or those who were afraid of life; beside the numbers who joined because they found here a freedom which, with the prevailing Hispano-Moorish attitude, no father would have tolerated in his house, there were others who elected to join because of an inner conviction. They knew the price demanded and yet abandoned high stations in the world in order to take the veil.

It was for the sake of these latter that the Church was willing to relax the severity of the rules, for she needed men and women who had known the world, and who, beneath the veil and the cowl, would retain their initiative and their will to action. The herds of merely pious sheep required shepherds experienced in the ways of the world. And St. Theresa was wise enough to be primarily interested in those who joined the Church out of their strength of will, and not in those who fell into the conventual arms on account of weakness. She discouraged the latter, even urging them to marry below their station rather than to take the veil. Often, to enable the girl to marry, she sought to secure a dowry for some illegitimate child who had been brought up in a convent.

Mere numbers in convents and nunneries meant nothing to her. Among those qualified, she chose only the élite, for she expected them to cleanse the monastic life. She expected them to save those institutions which were populated by weaklings who had ventured into worldliness and were now threatened with spiritual shipwreck. She herself

had once experienced a great danger. At the age of twenty-five she seemed to be on the verge of damnation.

In her *"Conversaciones"* she writes very reservedly of her dangerous visits and connections. These liaisons, as we feel certain *conversaciones* should be translated, made a strong impression upon her. She writes: "My heart took great pleasure in them." The "poisonous liaisons" lasted for years before she returned to prayer, and that was the beginning of her salvation.

She records one curious incident that occurred during these wasted years.

One day her father confessor confessed to her that for many years he had been living in sin, and that he continued to read mass though there was much talk in the community of his shameful failing. She made the priest tell her more about his private life. "Now that I understood everything I saw at once that the unfortunate man was not as guilty as he thought." The woman who was the cause of all the scandal had hung around his neck a copper charm in the shape of an idol. Theresa took it and threw it into the river. The priest awoke as if from a dream and became again a man of rigid virtue. St. Theresa concludes in this fashion: "I have little credence in all that is commonly said of magical powers. But I am relating what I saw, so that men may be on their guard before women who often do not scruple to employ base methods to attract them."

Thereafter Theresa went out to win over living people, not dead ones, to the cloister. There was Mariano, a Neapolitan of noble and wealthy family, learned in theology, strong as a peasant, with nerves like a bandit, and a dagger lying very loosely in its sheath. Added to all that he was a poet, and moreover he was so notably skilful at handling delicate situations that the fathers of the

Council of Trent sent him to the northern countries. He became Intendant to the king of Poland, gave up women, went over to the Maltese, took part in a duel at Saint-Quentin, and was put in prison for murder. Two years later he was recognized as innocent and freed. Then he became the tutor of the children of Philip II. He also became an engineer.

One day he heard of a hermitage near Seville where several pious men lived in extreme independence. He went there at once. It was a situation after his own heart. He had been living there for eight years when Theresa met him and immediately set herself to the task of winning him over to the monastic life. He took the cowl and became a splendid soldier of the Reform, though at times he could be very trying. Until his death he remained the same wild, unmannerly Mariano that he had always been.

Another disciple whose temperament was exactly after Theresa's own heart, was Catherine of Cardora, a duchess related to the kings of Aragon. She had been governess to Don Carlos and Don Juan of Austria. One night she cut her hair, climbed out of her window, put on men's clothes, and that she might lead the life of a hermit sought a cave and a desert. She found both in that region of the La Mancha, from which eighty years later a well-known knight errant was to go forth. There she lived for many years and became a famous hermit. No one knew that she was a woman, no one knew that she was the missing duchess, until once she left lying in her grotto a letter from Don Juan of Austria.

Theresa reports that her popularity waxed so great that frequently the entire plain was covered with the wagons of the people who came to see her. She wished to found a cloister on this spot and to become a nun, but it was to be more of a monastery than a convent, and she was to

wear men's clothes. She went to the Escurial to obtain money for her project. The papal nuncio made some remarks regarding her clothes and her manner of walking as if she were a bishop, whereupon she asked him for his blessing and bade him let her depart in peace. St. Theresa pitied those who thought Catherine was a fool.

Theresa reached the age of forty-five before she began her great work. So far she had spent herself in vague efforts and had only failures to record. She spent a preparatory year taking stock of herself, and the news went forth that she was possessed by the devil. But she lay quietly in prayer and meditation and pondered over the first step she was to make on the road to holiness which she now clearly envisaged.

About the year 1200, Albert, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, had imposed the following principal rules on the order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Secluded life, silence, prayer, abstinence from all liquors, and almost continuous fasting. The decay of morality which attacked all the religious orders in the fourteenth century as a result of the overpopulation of the cloisters, also struck the Carmelites, who commissioned their general to obtain from the Pope a relaxation of the Albertinian rules. Eugene IV therefore issued an order canceling the rules of total abstinence, of silence, of seclusion, and of the great fasts. Soon thereafter, the Carmelites began to lead a gay life, which is thus described by the Venetian envoy to Madrid after his visit to the Charterhouse at Seville: "These brothers are half-way on the road to Paradise."

Jean Soreth, on account of his dark complexion surnamed "the devil" by the inhabitants of his native Normandy, founded in 1442 the feminine branch of Our Lady of Carmel while he was General of the order. A hundred years before St. Theresa he labored indefatigably for the

restoration of the old discipline. But he aroused the hatred of his fellow-brothers: he died of a poisoned peach given him by the Carmelites of Nantes.

When Theresa took upon herself the task of completing the work which Jean had attempted too soon, she was only an unknown, shy little nun who, it is true, was permitted to mortify her flesh, but only because it was believed to be a good example, and because it was considered simply as the effect of a strong pious desire to save her own individual soul. Theresa lacked all those things with which Jean Soreth had armed himself: eminent position, Papal brief, corporeal strength; and she was, moreover, a woman, and supposed to keep her mouth shut. But she possessed one characteristic that enabled her to accomplish anything she pleased, namely, her mysticism.

This mysticism had been growing in her for twenty years, and now pervaded her whole being, penetrating even the logical clarity of her mind. Theresa was unique. Her mysticism cannot be defined. She represents a creative belief of the highest type, which finds satisfaction not in the salvation of her own soul, but only in the moral regeneration of her people. She was not in the least morbid; her will never lost its strength. Did she not busy herself with the problem of the convent's menu, so that the diet should not become monotonous? Did she not repeat over and over again that one must be on one's guard against irritated nerves and impoverished blood, and that epidemics of ecstasies and visions in a cloister were to be treated with food and sleep? She declared curtly that most ecstatics and visionaries are "sick brains" and she did not at all admire but reprimanded severely those cloisters where such diseases were frequent. In 1578 she writes to a mother superior: "If I were there, there would not be so many extraordinary things happening in your convent."

As to her own ecstatic condition, she obeyed all the intelligent verdicts of the Church to suppress it. She stressed the importance of caring for the body, for otherwise it took revenge on the spirit and caused a "dreadful illness."

In her writings, St. Theresa has given us some exceptionally subtle analysis of her mysticism. She attempted to interpret her spiritual ecstasies and explain their concurrence with bodily distress and decrepitude. Yes, accompanied, followed perhaps, but never caused by these bodily conditions! Her mysticism was not of the imaginative kind, it was rather an ardent tenderness of the heart, one which neither fires the mind nor dulls the understanding.

When in 1560 the idea of founding a convent of Carmelites seized her, she planned one where the inmates would live according to the old rules in all their severity,—in enduring pain and fear of God, and not in the consciousness of having attained salvation for one's own soul by the self-sufficiency of prayer. And in this house of meditation there was to be only one priceless freedom,—that of the spiritual life. According to St. Theresa, our happiness is conditioned by our common aim, God, and not by our manner of living. The why is important, not the how. She did not want "every pious person who adopts a dreary life to be imitated, and people to be afraid that if they speak or even breathe, their piety will run away from them." She wished people to be happy at heart and to busy themselves making others happy. One should beware, she says, "of fleeing from one's spirit," when one has the good fortune to possess one. "And no one," she insists, "has too much spirit."

Her activities to further the monastic heroic life excluded almost all the types who had formerly sought refuge in the cloisters. These institutions had degenerated on the one hand into boarding-schools for young ladies

and into salons of gay life, and on the other, into insane asylums, exhibiting a variety of lunatics and subject to constant epidemics of miracles. Theresa forbade entrance to those girls who did not have the call, who simply "wanted to run away from some unendurable situation in the world."

In addition, she excluded all those who had bodily deformities, or were weak-minded, no matter how large a gift they could bring with them. She refused imbeciles, saying that "they were incurable." She took great care to prevent women affected by melancholia from entering, for this was a contagious disease and had to be dealt with as any other dangerous illness. Melancholia, she claimed, is a desire to act only in accordance with one's will, but this will is distorted by the peculiar opinion which the patient has of himself. It is not a fatal sickness, but cures are very rare. People often go totally crazy from it, and in any case they are always unbearable. Theresa would not allow these "melancholy" women to pray very much, but made them work a great deal, and constantly pointed out to them in every way that they were not in the least as interesting as they thought they were.

She respected culture and knowledge, but abhorred talkative pedantry. "God is not anxious to have His ears filled with long orations." Especially since He is capable of listening with one ear, and in any case, never takes into consideration anything but the intention of the orator. Theresa loved youth and its charming gayety. She admired a healthy mind and straight thinking, and she appreciated merit whenever she encountered it.

A friend lent her some money with which she purchased a neighboring house capable of housing twelve nuns who might elect to live according to the old rule. All Avila was aroused to opposition, but Theresa had managed to get the

necessary Papal permission with the help of a third party who knew how to go about it, and so in 1562 four girls donned the robes of the order of the Carmelites of St. Joseph, as Theresa had named her establishment.

The rebellion of the Avilese lasted a long time. There were many who wanted to tear down the new convent, because they feared that they would be forced to pay new tithes to maintain St. Joseph. The city sued St. Theresa for having opened a convent without a license. The suit was fought in the courts of Madrid and Theresa was victorious. She pleaded her own case before Philip II, and the Nuncio had to give in. He knew that among these people the king counted for more than the Pope, and here the king was for the Reform.

Four years later Theresa received a visit from the General of the order, and was given patents to found further establishments. She tells us that she had not asked for these patents, but even as she stood with the papers in her hand, with the General on his way to Italy, she was struck with an idea. At once she sent messengers after the General and asked and received the right to found monasteries of Carmelites composed of monks willing to live according to the old rule. In 1567 the Carmelite monastery of Medina del Campo was established. Her first monastery, she used to say, was founded with one and a half men. The one was the noble rowdy, Padre Antonio, and the half was the small and delicate John of the Cross.

The number of cloisters whose inmates wore sandals instead of shoes grew by leaps and bounds. The excesses of their barbarous discipline, which St. Theresa tried in vain to stem, made the severe nuns and monks of Our Lady of Mount Carmel very popular. Miracles and visions occurred wholesale. And the enthusiastic mob ran

to gape at every white cloak or black veil. "As if they were 'los toros,'" writes St. Theresa.

The unreformed began to fear for their very existence. And when in 1575 a reformed monk was appointed inspector of the cloisters, the war came out into the open and was carried on against the "poor old woman" with all the resources of a mighty organization, many clever heads, and the support of Rome. Only St. Theresa's genius enabled her to come out successfully after a period of apparent defeat.

The shod Carmelites (as they were called to distinguish them from the unshod, sandal-wearing Carmelites of St. Theresa) called her the "Vagabond" and shut her up in the cloister Incarnacion. She advised her friends to remain quiet. But these friends were of a different temperament, being wild, quixotic characters like that Mariano who preached on the text: "There is a time for peace, and a time for war," and demanded resistance of the strongest kind. There were not a few battles.

But defeat came, as Theresa had seen it was bound to come if they persisted in overt measures. In the year 1578 the reformed cloisters were dissolved, and all the leaders who could be caught were clapped into prison and whipped like dogs. When Theresa in her cell heard the Nuncio's command to destroy all her establishments, she experienced the saddest blow of her life. God had ordered her to do this work, but now He had given it up and abandoned her. It was as if reality, with a devilish burst of laughter, had awakened her from a sweet dream. St. Theresa went through her Gethsemane, the *noche escura del alma,* the dark night of the soul.

Her dark night, however, proved to be not the climax and the close, but rather a new way out. The essence of life lies in its quality of transmission. Thomas says that

the capping of an act is its becoming the cause of some other act. Only the victor himself knows the complete surrender of self which lies back of the words: "Thy will be done." After an heroic defeat it is the wounded hand which clears the barriers surrounding man's spirit, and leads the way to God.

During her captivity Theresa not only wrote the most delicate of her mystic books, *Las Moradas,* but she sent out hundreds of letters to monks, gentlemen, the king, and the Cortes. These letters have not come down to us. We have a way, however, of judging their effect. The king of Spain was led to say to the Nuncio: "You will oblige me, Monsignor, if you protect virtue. You have no love for the reformed Carmelites and you show it all too clearly."

The Nuncio understood. He made peace and Rome approved. The reformed Carmelites were organized as a separate province independent of the order which followed the milder rule.

The saintly Theresa was set free. The last years of her life were devoted completely to practical tasks. This weak little woman rode thousands of miles on the back of a donkey or in a crude wagon, and she never grew tired, she never lost courage; she warned, encouraged, saw to justice, like the busy Martha in the service of Mary that she was.

Vita tua, via nostra, is the way Thomas à Kempis epigrammatically expressed the monastic ideal. The Church accustoms itself to the world, changes spontaneity into custom and mysticism into symbolism. The ascetic flight from the world is always a preliminary to a return to the world. All great hermits and monks were mighty and heroic lovers of actuality who passed on the torch of life. They were never cowards or selfish visionaries fleeing from life. Monks who were never taught anything more

than how to be good monks subsequently became excellent colonizers, teachers, philanthropists, statesmen, all because they wanted to reach the kingdom of God. They carved their way to the next world straight through this one.

When the spirit takes on a material shape, it invariably exhibits the tendency to lose its plasticity and its freedom. It is in order to wrest life from mechanism, to see that the torch is not extinguished, that such vital, energetic personalities as Benedict, Bernard, Dominic, Catherine, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius, and Theresa are born to this world. The Church decays when her spirit is not fed with the nourishment of this élan vital.

When Theresa Cepeda entered the convent she took a broom and sang and worked. As long as she lived she never let that broom out of her hands. And she directed it not only against the bodily dirt, which was not scarce among the monks of those days, but also against the dirt of the soul. As part of the dirt of the soul she considered that evil of over-conscientiousness which gnaws at and destroys weak and narrow minds. She writes to an intolerant Prior: "Do not play the part of a sanctimonious prude who is scandalized at everything." Ever busy with her broom, she writes to a prelate who reproaches himself for his absentmindedness at prayer: "As to your absentmindedness, I, too, am afflicted with it, and may I advise you to ascribe it as I do, to a weakness of the mind. Our Lord knows full well, that when we pray, our intention is to pray as we ought to."

She experienced many minor annoyances in dealing with her nuns' childish scruples. She writes to the cloister of Alcala, that they must make no fuss over the material to be used for making shoes, but simply state that shoes may be worn. She had a way of terminating subtle moral-

izations and eternal controversies with a single sentence. For instance, she was asked what is one to do with respect to those ideas which occur to us suddenly without any attempt on our part, and which frequently present to us the picture of a sin, if not the actual desire to sin. Are we to be held responsible for these sudden brain fancies? The saint answered: "Do not imagine for a moment that a mere thought can be a sin, no matter how bad it is."

Only her eyes were as alive as ever in her decrepit body, half-paralyzed, distorted with pain and fevers. But out of those eyes her inner life still glowed uninterrupted. She was still gay-hearted, her spirit still strong; her soul retained all its nobility, and her nature was preserved from eccentricity by that remarkable common-sense which so frequently characterizes geniuses. Though discordant qualities dwelt in her, she was never thrown off her track. One day she was preparing a fish for her nuns, when suddenly she was seized with ecstasy; her limbs stiffened, she could neither speak nor move. When the crisis had passed, she finished her fish. Not for a moment had she let go of the pan or the knife.

Of her contemporaries, she demanded the superhuman because she knew that only the superhuman was certain to succeed. To have asked less would have been to achieve nothing. And frequently she received more than she had asked for, and then she had to protect the body from too much spirituality.

St. Theresa died in the year 1582, at the age of seventy-six. She was buried in the Carmelite convent at Alba, behind walls of stone and iron, under a mountain of rocks. But Spanish custom had not done with her. Two monks worked through four nights to dig her out. One of them cut off her hand as a relic. Another monk snatched her arm, which remained with him "as though he had plucked

a ripe fruit." A nun brought a pair of shears and cut off the saint's hair. Cities, greedy for the pilgrim trade, quarreled over the rest of her body. After many vicissitudes all that was mortal in her was brought to eternal rest at Alba.

SISTER MARIANA

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In the month of January of the year 1669 there appeared a little book bearing the imprint of Barbin of Paris. Its contents consisted of five unsigned and unaddressed letters, and nothing else, except a short foreword. In the foreword there was an explanation to the effect that these letters, which had been translated from the original Portuguese, had been addressed to a French nobleman once in the service of Portugal. The letters themselves revealed that the writer was a nun.

The thin octavo attracted much attention. Such letters were unknown to this age of epistolary literature, where rhetoric and learned quotations were employed to describe the emotions of love. This was the period when Mlle. de Scudéry used to go through her Corneille to find suitable expressions for her sorrow. The Portuguese letters put an end to these literary model epistles. Here the voice of the heart spoke directly without rhetorical decorations, and in simple language described the stricken soul of a woman who, in the same moment, had won and lost everything. The time was propitious for the appearance of such a book; and its influence is not wholly lost even in our own day.

A certain secrecy was maintained, but already Saint-Simon knew that the letters had been addressed to the youthful Marquis of Chamilly, later Marshal of France and hero of many battles. Not until 1810, however, was the writer revealed as Sister Mariana Alcoforado of the convent at Beja. Some contemporary had jotted down the

name in his personal copy, a first edition, and Boissonade in 1810 came upon it accidentally. Subsequent investigations reconstructed much of the history preceding the letters.

It appears that in 1664, Chamilly, then twenty-six years of age, commanded a regiment of dragoons and achieved distinction in many of those battles against Spain which culminated in the independence of Portugal. In particular, the Marquis conducted the siege of Ferreira Castle, whose fall practically terminated the war. It was on his way back to Lisbon that the young victor passed through the nearby town of Beja.

He was walking his horse through the cheering crowds which filled the streets, while from the windows fans and flowers were showered upon him as though he were a famous toreador. He looked up. Sister Maria Concepcion bowed to him from the balcony of her convent. He was aware of two eyes so compelling that he had to dismount and tarry. "I only saw you riding past," she says in one of her letters, "and thereby lost forever all peace and tranquillity."

For the brave Chamilly, this was just a short romantic interlude between two battles. He treated women as he treated besieged cities. He never stayed after capitulation. The destinies which he threw into turmoil, whether by love or sword, never detained him. The poor nun of Beja to whom love had suddenly brought the happiest and bitterest experience of her life, and all in so short a time, could not keep her faithless lover from departing.

Her sorrow is so great, that even her Mother Superior, usually so harsh, is kind and lenient, and all the sisters of the convent are full of pity: "My love has touched everybody, only you remain indifferent, and write cold letters in which you thoughtlessly repeat the same things.

And you leave half of every page blank, in order that I may see how anxious you are to have done with the disagreeable task."

In her heart she was convinced that she would never see him again, but she preferred to deceive herself. "How will you ever be satisfied with a love that is less violent than mine? You may find women who are more beautiful, although you often declared that I was the most beautiful you had ever seen, but you will never find so much love as I have to offer, and nothing else matters. But please do not write of such indifferent subjects and do not, pray, trouble yourself to ask me to remember you. For neither can I forget you nor can I forget that once upon a time you allowed me to hope that you would come back to me."

In the third letter she says: "I have not the courage to bring myself to hope that you no longer think of me. On the contrary, I am terribly jealous of all that may make you happy, of all that touches your heart and your senses. I do not know why I write to you. I see very well that you have only pity for me, and what good can your pity do me? I am furious at myself when I think of all that I sacrificed for you and what I earned thereby, the anger of all my relatives, the punishments meted out to me by my order, and, worst of all, your ingratitude. And yet, in spite of all, I realize only too well, that my actual feelings are such that I would joyfully bear much worse for the sake of your love."

The day came when Sister Mariana waited in vain for even those short and indifferent letters of the Marquis. Once more she writes and then, drawing her veil tighter about her head, she withdraws into the solitude of her cloister, sees no visitors and takes part in no festivity.

The while in Paris, when the Marquis and his comrades

are bored with talking shop, de Chamilly takes out of his wallet the letters from his Portuguese nun and laughingly points out that Venus is as kind to him as Bellona, and that the rule: *"Pilosus aut fortis aut libidinosus"* has its exceptions.

To remove every vestige of doubt from those who could not understand Portuguese, the Marquis employed the Gascon wit, Pierre Girardin de Guilleragues, to translate the letters into his most polished French, and have them printed by Barbin in the Rue de l'Abbesse. In those days, it is said, such an indiscretion was not considered ungallant for the love of a beautiful woman was an honor to any man.

The happy soldier was envied and admired, and everyone enjoyed the letters of the nun of Beja, who from the pomegranate garden of her convent could look down over the Guadiana upon which her lover had gone away, waving a smiling "Au revoir" while he thought, with a satisfied sigh: "That's the end of that!"

And Sister Mariana drew her veil about her throat and shut herself forever in her sisterhood, the better to preserve intact the memory of her love.

NINON DE LENCLOS

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No story is more suited to be told as a moral tale than that of the beautiful Ninon. Her life lends itself readily as an edifying example to be imitated by all those women who would lead a virtuous life and be a joy to their fellow-mortals.

Ninon, born in Paris on the tenth of November, 1620, was an only child. Her father was Henri de Lenclos, a man of excellent family. Her mother was a Raconis. The latter was a very pious person and early put into her daughter's hands such tracts as Francis de Sales' "De Amore Dei." Her father, on the contrary, was a free-thinker, and gave her the works of Montaigne and Gassendi. The little girl found her father's teachings more to her liking, and already at the age of thirteen reached this short and decisive conclusion regarding her mother's instructions: *"Qu'il n'y avait rien de vrai à tout cela!"* (That there was no truth to all that.) Tallement, Bussy's contemporary, has preserved for us this phrase of Ninon's in his concise and malicious *"Historiettes,"* one of which he devoted to her.

Ninon's father found it possible to introduce his extraordinarily talented and beautiful daughter very early into the society of the Marais, where people gave themselves up to a merry round of pleasures, untroubled by the dangers threatening the country both from within and from without. The last rays of the sinking sun of the Renaissance gilded these days and invited to sensuous rest and enjoyment, not to work and deed as they had when it

stood high at noon. Idleness was a pleasant relief, the senses were refined, and adventure, once pursued in strange lands with drawn dagger, now conveniently and peacefully entered the drawing-room. With the advent of Ninon, the dissoluteness of the time was tempered with good sense and friendliness, and sensuality was mingled with sweetness and charm.

It was Ninon's beauty that accomplished all this. It is, however, not surprising that those who have described her charm have contradicted themselves, and that Tallement even says: *"Qu'elle n'en eut jamais beaucoup."* (That she never had a great deal.) The portraits which have come down to us do not reflect a beautiful woman. All this may more than likely be accounted for by the harmony of all her parts, which was such, that no part could be praised separately. The era lacked the hand of Jean Clouet to do her justice, and no doubt the exaggerated statements which were spread about her led some to be disappointed; moreover those whose suits had been scorned might have been interested in adverse statements. But the real cause of this state of affairs is that her harmonious beauty was never fully revealed except to those who could admire each single part and yet never lose sight of her beauty as a whole.

The writers of memoirs have left us descriptions of Ninon's tall figure, her shapely legs and even shapelier arms, and her marvellous, soft white hands. Her skin was clear and delicate and gave proof, along with her moderate embonpoint, of sturdy good-health. Her hair was chestnut brown and her neatly curved and well-separated eyebrows were black. Her eyes were deep velvet, *patte de velours,* eyes in which desire and resistance were twin monarchs. Her teeth were beyond comparison, her lips—*"un peu raillantes et relevées vers le coin"* (a bit

Ninon de Lenclos

scornful and lifted at the corners), so that one swooned at the thought of a kiss. Her smile was a kind promise.

No! Let the beauties of Ninon's body remain a legend which each new teller shall decorate at his pleasure with the most beautiful inventions of his desire or the borrowed actualities of his latest love. Just recently I said to myself as I caught the glance of a woman whose eyes were like liquid amber: "Ninon's eyes must have been like that. Those were Ninon's ankles," I said to myself as I mounted a staircase behind a pretty girl. "Ninon's hands were like yours, Mary,—that beautiful white cup of your hands from which I sipped the wine you offered me." Everyone knows Ninon's beauty. True, everyone has a different conception of her, but they are all Ninon, for she was beauty incarnate.

If the contemporaries of Ninon are inadequate and contradictory on the subject of her beauty, they are nevertheless all agreed in their praise of her intellectual qualities. To the feminine readers who deign to listen to me, I should like to say that no invented story could so well illustrate the truth of the statement that a naturally well-endowed sensuality is the basis of all human beauty. Ninon possessed all the talents demanded by the society of her time, and these she displayed with so much fascination that she touched with life the emptiest social graces. She played the lute and the theorbo, was considered the best saraband dancer of her day, and delighted her listeners with her voice, which was only *"une petite voix de ruelle"* (the small voice of a street-singer) *"mais,"* she would say: *"la sensibilité est l'âme du chant"* (tenderness is the soul of singing).

These were talents fit only for gay, minor occasions. Beyond these and beyond her beauty were the more important qualities of her heart and mind, her generosity

and her wit. She made herself the most trusted friend of many people, and they were as boastful of having acquired her friendship, as her lovers were of having possessed her body.

"Le moindre défaut de filles galantes est la galanterie" (Fast women's least fault is their flirtatiousness), said La Rochefoucauld, and Ninon was gallant but not a *galante fille* as these women were called at the time. She was amorous and she had her caprices, as she used to say, and it was from her caprices that she learned all her precious knowledge concerning love and her gracious conception of voluptuousness, which I should like to recommend to those of my readers who are of her sex. To them I would address these further pleas, that they do not follow Orpheus, whose music softened stones, but Eros, who does not sing at all; that they look to their mirrors for compliments and not to poets; and, finally, that they keep in mind the words of a wise woman who said: "Virtue is one of man's most beautiful inventions."

Some one has called this pure love cerebral debauchery. Erotic metaphysics had no meaning for Ninon. She would declare: *"Aimer, c'est satisfaire un besoin."* (One loves in order to satisfy a need.) She loved this cynical expression because it embodied so compactly all that was directly opposed to what seemed to her the dangers of love, namely, deception, lies and tears. It is this over-refined conception of love that leads a woman to say reproachfully to her lover: "It was but this one hour that you loved me!" As if life were so long that "this one hour" did not count! As if an hour of love might not be as long as a year!

"Satisfaire un besoin": that is the ingenuous truth which explains to us puzzled men the often surprising manner in which a woman chooses her lovers. *Un besoin à satis-*

faire,—true, but we must not interpret this in a narrow fashion and let it frighten us. Ninon understood and required those delicious moments of doubt and expectation which precede surrender. But she never let herself be so deceived regarding the deeper and more serious meaning involved, as ever to waste it, lose it, or deny it.

To appease the fanatic and subtle lover, here is a further elucidation of Ninon's conception of *besoin:* "Is there anywhere a more delightful sensation than that of a lover who knows his love is returned? Can there be anything more enchanting than the resistance of a woman who seems to plead not to abuse it? Is there anything more seductive than a voice which excitement has robbed of its breath? Than the refusal for which the beloved reproaches even herself?"—Love, to Ninon, was a taste based on the senses, a blind feeling which does not insist upon any merit in the object which has aroused it, nor demand a sense of obligation—in a word, love for Ninon was no more than a fancy independent of our volition, *et qui est sujet au degoût et au repentir.* (And which is subject to disgust and repentance.)

To one of her lovers who was waiting impatiently for the fulfillment of his desires, Ninon said: "Wait until my caprice is over." Ninon never broke off abruptly or angrily with her lovers. When she no longer loved them, she bade them farewell so beautifully that they never ceased to remain excellent friends. So great was Ninon and so sure of her love that she was never too cowardly to utter the words: "I do not love you any longer." She never adopted any subterfuge of illness or played out that sorrowful comedy of lies which finally leaves the heroine with the necessity of hating the man she once loved. Ninon expressed her natural feelings thus: "When a woman cannot find any pleasure in a man who seeks to win her love, then she

must never abuse his credulity, nor arouse any hopes in him, but rather clearly and plainly bid him depart. On the other hand when she does love, she must not allow herself to be entreated longer than will be agreeable, that is, no longer than the sweetness of the anticipation endures."

There are some who would dispute Coligny's right to be considered Ninon's first lover, and would give that distinction to Saint-Etienne. But Saint-Evremont, who was Ninon's best friend and who therefore deserves credence, names Coligny as the happy person. It is well-known that this duke of Chatillon was a Protestant, but Ninon's charms were so great that she permitted herself to quarrel with him over the respective merits of their religions without thereby causing Coligny to leave her.

There are no witnesses to apprise us of how this first love ended. Tallement declares that the commonly assigned story, which so calumniated Coligny, is an invention. But Tallement does not know of any other tale to explain the death of Ninon's first love. It ended, however, after having taught Ninon the truth about herself.

It was in these early days that Ninon acquired the friendship of Marion de Lorme, who was no longer very young but still beautiful, even though she had to take cold foot-baths to keep her nose from becoming too red. These two *amoureuses* had much in common,—besides lovers, as it sometimes happened,—but one thing distinguished them radically. Marion never revealed Ninon's beautiful unselfishness in the choice of a lover. None the less they remained excellent friends, for Ninon especially was so sure of her own worth that she never had reason to fear the company of another woman. Saint-Evremont used to call them *"ces deux Laïs,"* and they were both proud and fond of each other and delighted to show their

affection. They often slept together. Marion once gave Ninon a silk-lined basket of spaniels. The duke of Saint-Simon, who could scarcely be called gallant, said of them: *"Elles acquirent une réputation et considération tout à fait singulières."* (They acquired an extraordinary reputation and respect.)

The best society frequented their drawing-rooms. I shall recall only the more famous, Grammon, whom Lord Hamilton has made known to us, Saint-Evremont, the gay philosopher of the period, the handsome d'Elbène, who lived off his debts as others live on their income, the poet Desyvetaux, and Scarron, during the period when he was still young and well-built. It may be that these gentlemen regarded Ninon's love for Coligny without envy, but it is still more certain that they viewed their separation not without joy. Possession is far better than desire. Everyone prepared himself, while Ninon declared that she treasured something far above constancy and loyalty, namely, friendship. Coligny was followed by others, among them de Palluan, who in turn was followed by de Miossens.

. . . aux maris si terrible
le Miossens à l'amour si sensible . . .
(le Miossens, so terrible to husbands, so sensitive in love.)

Thus Ninon exchanged loyalty for friendship and gave, as the pretty phrase goes: "her lovers their worst rivals in the persons of her friends."

Poor Scarron had to leave the gay Marais district and betake himself to the Faubourg Saint-Germain, there to seek the health he never found, for he came back lame in both legs. Ninon remained his truest friend. Often she sat for hours beside his chair, from which he could no

longer stir. Count Grammont might have taken Ninon as a model. He, for instance, would give up his best friend if the latter fell ill.

Scarron was not the only one missing in Ninon's drawing-room. That splendid old man Desyvetaux disappeared suddenly. And since his affairs were not always in the best of condition, Ninon was worried lest he had fallen into a melancholy mood, and she therefore went to seek him. She found him happier than ever.

One evening as Desyvetaux was entering his house, he saw a young girl lying unconscious before his door. Beside her lay a harp. He brought the girl into his house and gave her what was necessary. She recovered consciousness and played a piece on her harp to demonstrate her gratitude. Desyvetaux, who was a lover of music, was charmed. And when she lifted her voice in a song, accompanying herself the while, the old man realized that he was in love and that he could never bear to part with her. He succeeded in persuading her to stay with him. She remained, for she saw how happy she could make the old gentleman.

Now began an idyllic life for Desyvetaux. Dressed as Corydon—he was only seventy years old,—and a shepherdess, they went to one of his most beautifully decorated rooms, and there she played to him while he lay on a green carpet and listened, and now and then blew on his flute. Birds hopped out of their cages and stroked the harp with their wings and swooned with desire on the bosom of the shepherdess. Old Corydon was delighted with these well-trained birds, and from now on spoke only in eclogues.

Ninon found her former lover on the floor with his shepherd's crook and his flute, toying with the pink silk ribbons of his shepherdess' hat. She did not urge him to

return to her, for she saw at once how thoroughly happy he was with his new love. She remained his friend and often visited him during his charming masquerade, which he soon adopted permanently. As he lay dying he begged Mlle. Dupis, his pretty shepherdess, to play him his favorite saraband, and so he died, holding in his hands a yellow bound volume inscribed: "Out of love for the gentle Ninon, who gave it to me."

But in spite of the time which Ninon devoted to her friends, she never neglected love. She would often say to those who happened to please her (and she even wrote it to Noailles and caused no little consternation among the *précieuses* of the Hôtel Rambouillet): "I believe I shall love you for three months—which for me is as long as an eternity." Thus, too, she wrote to the Marshal d'Estrées, who left her in a condition *dont on rougit lorsqu'elle n'est pas le fruit d'un lien respectable.* (For which one must blush when it is not the fruit of a respectable bond.) The Abbé d'Effiat claimed he had a better right to the child, and since Ninon either could not, or would not decide, they left the decision to a throw of dice. Thus the Marshal won a son whom he brought up as the Chevalier de Boissière. This gentleman became an officer in the marine and died at a very advanced age in Toulon, where he was known as a great friend of music and musicians. Ninon always regarded him with such pleasure that she never rued the hour of her weakness which gave him life. Ninon became a mother on one other occasion, but the circumstances then did not have so much happiness in store for her.

The thirteenth Louis was dead, and with the regency of the youthful fourteenth began that era of French gallantry which created a European culture by the general efforts other countries made to imitate it.

"Der Wechsel des Geschmacks stritt wieder keine Pflicht,
Der Süsse Irrtum selbst hiess kein Verbrechen,
Vergnügen nannte man die zarten, feinen Laster."

(No duty interfered with a change of taste, adultery was sweet and not at all a sin, and delicate, graceful depravity was called by a new-old name: Pleasure.)

This was Ninon's happiest time, the period of her ripest beauty and her greatest fame. She was the celebrated Ninon, but she never wanted to have to owe her fame to her luck in love. She always preferred those who loved her for her own sake, and never could see anything in those who sought her out because of a vain ambition to possess the well-known Ninon. Her excellent conception of love as a whim of the passions preserved her from all false ambitions and gave her the assurance that her fancy would never give happiness to anyone unworthy of her love. Thus also she never knew remorse, for she never had any deceptions, unless we count her short experience with the handsome duke d'Enghien who, nevertheless, left something to be desired. He was, as a matter of fact, built rather for the service of Bellona than for Venus. Ninon no doubt recalled the phrase: *"Pilosus aut fortis aut libidinosus,"* as she lay in his arms. Once she sighed and said: "Ah, my lord, you must be very brave indeed." Nevertheless she preserved the duke's friendship and loved to show his picture beneath which Claudien had written the verse:

"Pour avoir la valeur d'Hercule,
Il n'est pas obligé d'en avoir la vigeur."

(To have Hercules' valor it is not necessary to own his vigor also.)

Ninon did not think too highly of the virtue of con-

stancy in matters of love. She even went so far as to say that it derived from a fear of being unable to find another heart once one had been surrendered. And it was always she who said farewell first, choosing intelligently the right moment before her lover became tired. No one was allowed to have too much of her, to become satiated, for she wanted everyone to remain her friend.

Of course it could not fail to happen that certain women whom nature had not permitted to follow Ninon's example should be scandalized by her conduct. The Queen Regent sent a detachment of the guard to Ninon, to take her to the Cloister of Repentant Maidens. But since, as Bautru has remarked, she was neither repentant nor a maiden, she had to be allowed the privilege of choosing her own convent. She selected the Franciscan Friars. Anne of Austria was very angry at this display of wit, but the duke d'Enghien not only calmed her, but told her so many beautiful things about Ninon, that the Queen Regent was sorry she had given so much trouble to such a charming person and one held in such universal admiration.

Ninon nevertheless determined to leave Paris. The place was becoming too disturbed. Everybody talked of the new taxes, and politics monopolized even the conversation of the Salons. Everyone had a different opinion, there was constant disputing and debating, and Ninon could not endure the turmoil.

She had reached the age of passion rather than caprice. Her lover at this time was a certain Marquis de Villarceaux. He was so jealous that he often concealed little boys under Ninon's bed to spy for him. To convince him of her loyalty, Ninon cut off her marvellous hair and sent the heavy tresses to him. Villarceaux ran to her house, threw himself before her, and, it was said *"qu'ils restèrent*

huit jours de suite au lit." (That they remained in bed eight days at a stretch.) Ninon later withdrew with him to one of his estates.

She stayed with him for three years, thus giving evidence of a depth of character which her former inconstancy seemed to belie. It may be, however, that she was so faithful only because Paris was so far. At any rate, when the two returned, Villarceaux remained officially her lover, but she took another lover, and then still a third. Paris was happy again and Ninon along with Paris. Louis XIV was reigning, the sun shone, and Molière was writing his comedies and reading them to gatherings at Ninon's.

Once she wrote to Saint-Evremont, who was now in exile in London, that she thanked God every night for her intelligence, and every morning begged Him to protect her from the stupidities of her heart. I do not wish to write down here all the foolishness of which Ninon's heart was capable. Those who wish may find them in those eighteenth century books which I myself have consulted bound in morocco and printed in Swabian italics. So you will have to seek elsewhere for the tales regarding Gourville, and those pertaining to Sancourt, whom every woman was in love with, except his own wife. Nor shall anything be said here of Chapelle who was so unlucky as to have big hands and a big belly, two things Ninon could not endure. This horrible Chapelle swore he would get drunk every day of his life, and write a scurrilous poem to Ninon, until she favored his love. He did drink himself dead drunk every day, but of the poems he wrote no more than thirty although Ninon did not give in on the thirty-first day, either to him or to anyone else.

The books tell in full detail all there is to be said with respect to La Chatre, the son of Mme. Sévigné. This

beautiful lad remained Ninon's lover for even a shorter period than his father, who had had to leave during the early success of his love, to lose his life in battle. Still Mme. Sévigné remained an excellent friend to Ninon, although she had lost a husband and son to this woman.

The dancer Pécour danced, was liked, and thus became Ninon's next lover and the successful rival of the virtuous Choiseul, who could never do anything but repeat his tiresome declarations of eternal passion. Ninon would say to him: *"Qu'il faut cent fois plus d'esprit pour faire l'amour que pour commander les armées."* (It takes a hundred times as much brains to make love as it takes to command armies.) The dancer Pécour was not only lucky, he was arrogant. One day at Ninon's, Choiseul met him attired in a kind of uniform. Choiseul made some scornful remarks concerning the uniform. Pécour replied: "You must not be surprised, Monseigneur, to see me wearing a uniform. *Je commande un corps où vous servez longtemps."*

Ninon was not always capable of extinguishing the fires she had started. Furthermore Ninon was no longer young, being fully sixty years. But her beauty was proof against time. She often used to say to her friend La Rochefoucauld, that he must add a note to one of his sayings, namely, that age was woman's hell, declaring that the phrase was not meant to apply to Ninon. In the paradise of her autumn the leaves did not become yellow and the nightingales did not cease to sing. Love still smiled in the tiny wrinkles around her eyes. Young men did not notice that Ninon was old, and old men became young again when they saw her.

Now she was fated to play her part in the only great tragedy of her life. By de Gersay she had had a son who was brought up unaware of his parentage, and at the usual

age came to the Salon of Ninon, for parents really sent their sons there to learn. Young Chevalier de Villiers fell in love with Ninon with all the fire of his twenty years. Ninon was kind to him, she was reserved, and tried to turn his love aside, but his passion reached a point where she had to tell him the truth. He stabbed himself before her, dying with the expression of his love still in his eyes.

Now Ninon became known as Mademoiselle de Lenclos. She had calmed down. *"Elle se contenta de l'aise et du repos après avoir senti qu'il y a de plus vif"* (she contented herself with ease and rest, after having known that there are more lively things in the world), as Saint-Evremont so gracefully put it. Not that she gave up love —for love would not give her up—but she strove to make her heart beat less fast.

She was seventy-nine years of age when the Abbé Gédoyn fell in love with her. She kept him waiting a long time before she at last received him in her famous yellow boudoir. And when the Abbé complained of her cruelty that had kept him pining so long, she replied: "Believe me, my desire was no less than yours, but pride restrained me. It is after all so unusual a case, that I wanted to wait until I was eighty. And since this morning I am eighty—" This final love lasted a full year; then Gédoyn left upon a voyage, and never showed any great desire to return. Ninon wrote to him: *"Les plus courtes folies sont les meilleures. . . ."* (The shortest follies are the best.)

Ninon died on the seventeenth of October, 1705.

On All Saints' Day of the year 1751 the ladies of the court adopted the fashion of carrying out their devotional exercises before the head of a dead person, decorated with ribands and roses. The Queen chose the head of Ninon before which to expiate and demonstrate her contribution. She nicknamed it: *"Ma belle mignonne."*

LISELOTTE OF THE PALATINE

LISELOTTE OF THE PALATINE

Mme. de Sévigné thought that Liselotte coming as she did from the obscure Palatinate was dazzled by French grandeur. The opinion is in error on two counts. For one thing, amid the artificiality of the French court Liselotte was as much distinguished by her naturalness, which often extended to coarseness, and her human frailty, which often reached childishness, as Sévigné was by her wit. In the second place, Sévigné, like many of the French, allowed herself to be deceived by the splendor of the widely imitated French civilization into believing that anything which did not fit into its narrow and artificial frame was barbarous.

Sévigné's wit was just then all the rage, but the wit of the Palatine lady, though neither fine nor elegant, was distinguished by a power of expression which none of her contemporaries possessed, excepting Saint-Simon. These two, the man with his understanding, the woman with her heart, the one in his Memoirs, the other in the three thousand letters which she wrote home, have composed history that has never required the interpretation of an historian.

That Liselotte was sacrificed as an innocent lamb on the altar of high politics, does not concern us here. We are so selfish as to overlook her complaint against her forced marriage to the king's brother, for it is to this very misfortune that we owe our acquaintance with a most original character. Not otherwise would she have written her marvellous descriptions of the *grande siècle*. Before

our eyes the heavy robes of the proud grandees stir into life, the ceremony begins with measured tread and unfolds before us revealing the tiniest details of its splendor and its misery.

Liselotte's father, Carl Ludwig, was equally adept with tongue and sword, and fought bravely with both to regain his throne, but in vain. He was the son of the so-called "Winter-king" who had lost the little kingdom of the Palatinate by his Bohemian expedition and the battle of the White Hill. So Carl Ludwig went to live and wait for better times at the gay court of Windsor with his Stuart mother. Meanwhile, he lived the life of a dandy and killed time in the elegant fashion of the day, until the peace of Utrecht was signed, and Carl Ludwig regained his kingdom.

On the way back to his miserable country, laid waste during the many long wars, he stopped at Cassel and there met the Princess Charlotte who became his bride. In 1649 he entered Heidelberg, the capital. A year later the castle was so far repaired that it was possible to celebrate the wedding. Charlotte was a beautiful woman, far too beautiful for her jealous old husband, who, though very much in love with his wife, considered her a bit too coquettish, and also too extravagant. The latter fault he partially offset by his own miserliness. He is known to have gone to a cobbler and to have stood waiting for his shoes to be soled, employing his leisure profitably by bargaining for a better price. Meanwhile the Archduchess had ordered a famous coiffeuse from Paris.

Charlotte was angry that her pregnancy prevented her from taking part in the hunting before Elizabeth Charlotte's birth, May 27, 1652. Not two years later the parents had become so estranged that the mother could reach the resolution to cease conjugal relations with her

husband. Carl Ludwig was more than satisfied with the new arrangement. For he had found in the maid of honor, Frau Luise Freiin von Degenfeld, a mistress who suited him completely. She was young, gentle, beautiful, thankful, and never had moods or whimsies. She was willing, moreover, to give the King a written declaration of her affection. In return she demanded and received a sealed and signed document assuring her of the continuation of the princely favors and permanent financial security.

The Archduchess, notified that it was all over with her love, seized a knife and threatened to kill her rival. Nothing happened however. Luise's social rank was raised and she lived as Carl Ludwig's morganatic wife under the very same roof as his first wife. A marriage ceremony was performed. Liselotte was then six years old. Her mother was striving to secure a royal grant, but was encountering the Duke's well-known miserliness.

Life in the Heidelberg castle was made rather trying by the presence of two wives, one of whom was certainly the Archduchess, while the other was nevertheless the "Illustrissima Signora," as the Archduke called his Luise. Fräulein von Offeln, Liselotte's excellent governess, had little love left for her former companion and secretly encouraged her charge to call Luise bad names. These childish pranks aroused her father's anger, though Liselotte could not understand just why. She only knew that Charlotte was her beloved mamma and the other an upstart.

The situation was really becoming critical when the Duchess Sophie of Hanover, Carl's clever sister, solved it in part by inviting Liselotte and Fräulein von Offeln to come to stay at her residence. Brother Carl, at first unwilling, reconsidered when it occurred to him that this

might be the first step in getting rid of Charlotte, who might take it into her head to follow her daughter. Liselotte cried on that June 9th, 1659, when she said goodbye to her mother, but a moment later "she was worried about what had become of her lemon," as Carl Ludwig reported to the beloved Luise.

The four years Liselotte spent at the court of Hanover were extremely important in her education. The motto here was: "We live but once." The young Duke Ernst August von Braunschweig-Lüneburg had nothing to do, inasmuch as his brother took care of all state affairs, so he spent his time in flirtations and in pleasing his palate. One sixth of his income went up his kitchen chimney. Both uncle and aunt were clever and sensible. They did not waste their lives in a courtly life of cabals and intrigues, but preferred to spend it peasant like in an eternal coarse carnival.

Liselotte learned French and Italian, and soon knew her Montaigne as well as her aunt did. But the prevailing fashion of Frenchifying everything was not followed. German was spoken, low German at that, because low German had more juice, more pith, than high German or French. As far as thought was concerned, this court was Voltairian one hundred years ahead of Voltaire's time, but as far as appearance and behavior, a hundred years behind with Fischart.

Sophie told the smuttiest stories with the greatest pleasure, and she was outdone later only by her niece and pupil, Liselotte. Everyone loved to eat, and ate both a great deal and frequently. Jokes were cracked constantly over the vicissitudes of digestion and kindred matters. Liselotte, who was now eating "for four" as Aunt Sophie wrote home, continued all her life to favor a well-loaded table,

Elizabeth Charlotte of Orleans

preferring her native dishes, especially cabbage and sausages.

In the spring, Charlotte having finally left Heidelberg, Carl Ludwig sent for Liselotte. They had managed to estrange mother and daughter by keeping them apart and intercepting their letters. The twelve-year-old girl left all the people she loved in Hanover, her *chère Tante,* her always jolly uncle, and her governess, who had lately married. In Heidelberg she was given a new governess, a Frenchwoman, who was so coarse that even Aunt Sophie might have hesitated before choosing her. The elderly Fräulein von Kolb who followed was still better, for she knew all the old German tales and Liselotte would listen to her for hours at a time, preferring the Eulenspiegel stories above everything else.

It was only when he wanted to make himself think that his love for Luise was something pure and ideal, that Carl Ludwig wrote canzone and madrigals to her. Otherwise he was a decent Rhenish man who loved his glass of beer, wanted to be on a good footing with his people, and never missed a parish fair. Boys and girls came in to the castle, or else Liselotte went out early in the morning to run around in the fields and woods with other children of the country.

She was just like a boy then, and she often wished she had been born a boy instead of a girl. She enjoyed sailing a kite much more than playing with her dolls. Especially did she hate the lessons in etiquette which spinster Kolb gave her and which warned her that it was not nice to shoot ladies in the seat with her bow and arrows.

When Liselotte was eighteen years old and showed no signs of contemplating marriage, the question was taken up by the State. She herself was absolutely without senti-

mentality. Once, speaking to an admirer she said calmly: "Love is like the dew, it falls indiscriminately upon cow-dung and rose-petal."

Diplomatic relations were entered upon with the house of Orange, with Brandenburg, with Courland, with Baden-Durlach. No results were secured, however, until an aunt took up the matter. She was Anne Gonzague de Mantua Nevers, a very intelligent woman, living at the court in Paris and called the Palatine Princess, since the death of her husband, the Palatine Count Edward, a brother of Carl Ludwig.

Anne Gonzague was in Frankfurt, travelling to Germany, when the news reached her of the sudden death of the wife of Philip Orléans. Louis XIV was anxious that his brother be married again at once, because of gossip, which whispered that the King was not without complicity in his sister-in-law's early death. He would have liked to see the Duchess of Montpensier take her place, but the Duchess declined. Aunt Anne began to weave her web. She wrote to Carl Ludwig that Monsieur might make a good match. At once Liselotte's father denied vehemently that his daughter wished to marry the duke of Anjou. She would prefer Monsieur. Interest at Versailles was aroused. In August 1671, Anne de Gonzague was able to report that it was up to Carl Ludwig to set the date and decide the question of religion.

There was just a little resistance here, because note had to be taken of the fact that the Palatine family was Protestant. It was expected, however, that "a way out would be found." And so it was. On her way to Paris, Liselotte stopped at Metz, became a Catholic, and was married to Philip Orléans by proxy.

The question of dowry, so Carl Ludwig understood, was dismissed in Paris, as "not worth the trouble of dis-

cussing," and much as this pleased the miser, it yet roused his pride into the promise of a small dowry, the instalments of which he rarely paid. Liselotte left Heidelberg on October 21, 1671, for ever. Her emotions were not very sublime. She simply bowed to the inevitable. She thought, so she wrote later, that it was "a very stupid matter when a woman puts it into her head that she must have a man. It is bad enough to be lame in one hand, but to have a husband is equally bad, if not worse." Still she obeyed. Eight weeks later she saw her husband for the first time as she stood beside him while their union was blessed by a bishop.

Philip was a strange person, but he was not an unsympathetic one. He was scarcely thirty years old, and wore rings and bracelets, just like a woman. Being rather short, he also went in for high heels. If his ears had not been hidden under his white powdered wig, he would have worn earrings too, as did Henri III of Valois. He had a very small face, a huge nose and a tiny mouth. He was more interested than was his wife in the etiquette, the dresses, and all the other preparations for the wedding. He did not care for hunting, or in fact for anything that took place in the open air.

On the other hand he loved card playing, company, food and drink, and spent hours before his mirror caring for his complexion. For this purpose he had amassed a huge supply of cosmetics. Originally he had been more talented than his royal brother, and it had been the delicate business of his governor to see to it that his talents were lost, for the King had to be, and had to remain, the more important personage. Those entrusted with Philip's education were completely successful.

When Philip, at the age of twenty-one, married the charming Henrietta of England only to find that she

showed more interest in the Count de Guiche than in her husband, the matter did not seem to concern him at all, for he was more occupied with the Chevalier Philippe de Lorraine than with his wife. The Chevalier was a strikingly handsome man, a gambler and a roué, who for four years extracted considerable sums from his loving friend, in spite of the fact that he was himself a very wealthy man. It finally became necessary to banish this evil spirit from the court. But the moment Orléans showed his qualities, as a brave soldier for instance, the jealousy of the King was aroused at the threat of his brother's growing popularity, and Philip was put back to his toys.

When the new Madame Royale took up her residence at Versailles, everyone waited for the King's opinion of her in order to be guided thereby. This unconcerned woman, with her red cheeks and robust appearance, did not particularly please the current French taste. Saint-Simon declared that she had "the peasant face and the peasant mannerisms of a Swiss guard." But the King was pleased with her. He liked her frank ways, and did not scruple to show his feelings towards her by various attentions. And to Liselotte the King was the Prince Charming of her childhood fairy-tales. She fell in love with the Roi Soleil. Yes, she loved him, and continued to do so, undisturbed by the succession of his mistresses and the turmoil of political events which destroyed her Palatine home. Politics had never earned her respect. Had she not seen her father brawling like a peasant with the neighboring princelings? And as for mistresses, she had never been a prude. It was not morals, but love for the King, which prompted her to hate these mistresses with an eternal hatred.

The happiness which Liselotte experienced in her first few years of marriage was due not to her husband but to

this secret, almost delicate, devotion. Her husband, when he expressed the emotion of love, seemed merely to be obeying a royal edict. Immersed in his enjoyment of courtly, delicate and refined delights, his almost feminine nature could scarcely bear the masculine Palatine Princess. He managed to give her children, but it took very little to make him rebellious and unfaithful. His pleasures took him in a totally different direction from those of the Madame Royale, who was often mistaken for a man when she rode out a-hunting.

The two had, however, one thing in common, and that was their devotion to the pleasures of the table. Both loved to eat. She frequently wrote to Germany: "I ate myself so full that I couldn't move," as though it were a piece of important information. She wanted advice on the question of relieving the consequences, and often she amused her aunt in Hanover with some detailed descriptions of noisy digestive activities which she carried on in company with her competing husband. This was all part of her naturalness, and it was this side of her, though not precisely the details revealed above, that won her the King's good graces. But Louis was a big eater himself, and at those little *soupers intimes* of which he partook generously in company with his mistress Montespan, the atmosphere was not always sweet-smelling.

Monsieur, her husband, is "the best man on earth, and we get along exceedingly well," and so she is quite delighted when her husband comes back after his victory over William of Orange at the battle of Mont Cassel. Not for a moment will she consent to disturb her joy by mixing in politics, as her father wants her to do, in order to induce the King to cease pillaging the Palatine lands in reprisal for Carl Ludwig's unwillingness to join the French league against the Emperor. She writes to her Aunt to

convey to Heidelberg the information that her only power is her ability to make the King laugh.

Still, when after the congress of Nimeguen, the French began their policy of reunion and the Palatine was to be their first sacrifice, Liselotte was overwhelmed with pity for her father and approached the King, who gave her fair words and quieted her fears. Suddenly in August, 1680, Carl Ludwig died, and Liselotte, realizing that the King was not completely guiltless in the matter of her father's early death, felt that her love had suffered a blow. "When I think of it, I become quite melancholy." She began to doubt the amiability of the court, and to suspect that she had only a political significance. Suddenly everything changed.

The King pardoned the Chevalier de Lorraine and allowed him to return home from his exile in Italy. For that, Philip of Orléans gratefully kissed his brother's hand. Still he remained for a while a good husband to Liselotte, who was ill, and a good father to their two children—the third had died at the age of three. He was not to be trapped by the scorn of his former companion, who derided him for having become an honest greengrocer. Attempts were made to rouse his jealousy, and unsuspecting Liselotte was talked about everywhere as having a love affair. This rather crude scheme did not work. Even the King laughed at the town's gossip.

Then Iago Lorraine refined his methods. By order of Orléans, a harmless maid of Madame's was accused of being a "procuress" and discharged. Liselotte prepared to leave the court of Monsieur. The King, his face set against any outburst that might give rise to scandal concerning his family, warned his brother: "I am ready to put my hand in the fire for the Duchess." A reconciliation was effected, but it was incomplete, all because Liselotte

had not been able to prevent herself from reminding her husband of the death of his first wife, which was commonly ascribed to poison administered by Lorraine. She burst out: "You will let me be poisoned like Henrietta, your first wife." These words could not be taken back. The damage was done and could not be repaired.

Queen Marie Thérèse died July 30, 1683. Three days later the court was moved to Fontainebleau. Madame de Maintenon seemed so oppressed with sorrow that the widowed King could not forbear jesting at her expense. Shortly thereafter Madame de Maintenon moved into the apartment of the dead Queen. There were great days in store for this forty-eight-year-old lady, and many evil ones for Madame Royale.

When Louis became tired of Montespan, the governess of the two children he had had from her succeeded to the royal favor. This was Madame de Maintenon, the widow of Scarron. To Liselotte this at first meant nothing more than that a new mistress had been added to the long row that had filed past the royal couch, just that and nothing more. But Madame de Maintenon had another aim in mind than to shine as Louis' mistress. Liselotte knew nothing of these plans or their causes; the effects, however, she soon began to feel.

Mme. de Maintenon was no longer young enough to be anyone's beloved, and she had, moreover, the intelligence and the good taste to realize that it would be ridiculous for her to express passionate emotions. She had been through a hard school of life. She had spent her childhood in prison, where her mother had gone to keep her father company. The man her mother had so loved was a spy, a gambler, and a drunken lout. She was a Huguenot but was forcibly baptized and sent to a convent.

She was seventeen years old when she married Scarron,

the cripple. She tended him until his death. It was a poverty-stricken ménage, but there was the always witty conversation of Scarron and his friends and there was much to be learned, if only in the matter of patience, from tending an ailing husband.

At length she became governess in the noble house of the King's mistress. The master fell in love with the servant. The King was no longer young; what was more reasonable then, than that their worthy love, albeit it had little passion in it, should eventuate in the sane union of marriage?

Françoise d'Aubigné had more intelligence than all the co-workers who thought to achieve their particular aims by helping her reach her goal. They had decided that it would be harder to get along with some young person possessed of nothing but her body, so they preferred to deal with this experienced older woman.

The marriage needed the consent of the King's brother, for without it there was little likelihood of success. To win Orléans was simply a question of dealing properly with Lorraine, who had more influence on Monsieur than had anyone else. Liselotte paid for this agreement. Her clever eyes did not fail to understand the situation. She writes: "The King sees that, the less attention he pays to me, the more his brother is pleased. And so I get the worst end of it. Yes, the King knows very well that it pleases Monsieur to despise me, and that the surest way to gain his favor is to do good to his favorites and to treat me poorly."

In the month of December, 1683, at Versailles, was celebrated the King's wedding to Madame de Maintenon.

Liselotte lost her temper at this marriage, though not out of jealousy, for she had, as we know, always taken the King's mistresses as a very natural matter. But Liselotte

had been bitten by the notion of equality of birth and rank. She thought it was unkingly that her revered Monarch should descend to marriage with this tousle head. The point was that the King had formerly allowed only his body to be captured, now he had lost his soul. This made her furious. She never failed to believe every scandalous piece of gossip concerning de Maintenon, and took good care to repeat it everywhere.

She had only scorn for the King's conversion under the influence of de Maintenon, and she derided his efforts to reform the court. "The King thinks he is devout because he no longer sleeps with young girls." She recognized the Tartuffe piety in all this business and despised it. Two, and even three times a day, she emptied a soul full of hate and anger in as many letters to Germany.

The letters were no secret at Versailles. They were read before being sent off. And so one morning on the eleventh of May, 1685, La Chaise, the king's father-confessor, whom Liselotte once described as "that long-eared Jesuit who is so good at drinking," told Father Jordan, Madame's confessor, that Madame had drawn upon herself the King's disfavor. This meant exile or possibly even the Bastille. As a special concession, however, the King was satisfied with decreeing her absence from the court. The accusations brought against her were only pretexts. The principal reason, her insulting attacks upon de Maintenon, was not mentioned and Liselotte did not suspect it. She defended herself, but could not change the order. The court was closed to her.

Two weeks later her brother died, and since he was the last of his line, Liselotte inherited the large estate. According to French marital rights, however, her husband was the actual possessor, and he soon squandered it on his mignons. The King came in person to Saint-Cloud to con-

vey his condolences. It was a political move, for according to the King, Madame inherited all Palatine, and he at once took up the defense of her natural rights, first diplomatically, later with arms.

At first Liselotte was happy because the King was again kind and attentive to her as he had been before her disgrace. Then she found out her name was being used to further the French demands for the possession of the Palatinate. A few years passed in talk and conferences. "The Usurper," the Lord of Neuburg, of a stock related to the previous ruler, claimed the land by right of the testament of the deceased duke. The French finally ceased palavering, issued a manifesto in September, 1688, and subsequently invaded the Palatinate.

As the Grand Dauphin, in command of the army, was leaving, Liselotte said to him: "I wish you would not go, for I confess to you that I can derive only pain from the idea that my name is being used to ruin my fatherland." The war was entered into, nevertheless, and in 1689 her home town went up in flames. The poor Princess Palatine was hated abroad because she allowed her country to be pillaged in the defense of her "rights," and she was not liked in France either, for her daily letters informed people abroad that she had no rights.

Occasional offenses against Monsieur's mignons still gave her a few moments of meaningless triumph. But she was soon to suffer a heavy blow. The king, who disposed of everyone as he pleased, arranged a marriage between her son and an illegitimate daughter whom he had had from the Montespan. She knew no other way to get even than to give her son a loud slap over the ear when, before the assembled court, he approached to kiss her hand. She thus describes her daughter-in-law: "A despicable person, drinks herself dead-drunk three or four times a day. No

one can stand her manners and her bad temper, and her figure is downright repellent. She is all crooked, has a horrible way of speaking as though her mouth were full of porridge. And her head is always shivering."

Liselotte was exaggerating, of course. According to many reports, Mademoiselle de Blois was not at all bad. But she was as angry over the unsuitability of this marriage as she had once been over the King's marriage to Maintenon, "the old hag." The latter, however, wrote in a very sensible way to a friend: "I can understand that the marriage isn't altogether to her taste, but it remains my firm conviction that one should always be reasonable. Now that the matter cannot be changed, she ought to be concerned about showing her best side to the King, and let what must, be. Only thus will she ever manage to get on his good side again." But Liselotte showed her worst side, all the more so because of de Maintenon's advice. She was convinced that the Queen hated her, and she could see no reason for this hate. She writes: "I'd like to know why that woman hates me so." There really was no reason, and furthermore there was no hatred. It existed only in Liselotte's imagination.

Madame de Maintenon was Queen of France for thirty-two years. She ruled the King, and thus all France, and her rule did not end until his death. The fact that the future rulers of France had mistresses has injured her reputation, for she has been classed with them. Madame de Maintenon was truly great. She managed to control the King and she succeeded in the even more difficult task of leading him. She tore him away from the most beautiful and most passionate of all his loves, namely, from Armide de Mortemart, who held him not only with her beauty, but with the stronger ties of habit. De Maintenon held the King until his death, not with her youth, for she

was no longer young, not with her beauty, for she had never possessed much, and now had certainly lost it altogether, but with the genius of her sex, which she possessed completely.

A paramour founds her stormy rule of one hour upon her senses, a favorite bases her more enduring dominion upon the mental or character weakness of her partner. Such, for instance, was the case of that Leonora Galigei, the Florentine enchantress, who was accused of using poisons, but declared that her power over Marie de Medici did not consist in magic but was simply the domination of a stronger character over a weaker one.

Madame de Maintenon ruled over a forty-five-year-old man, the king of common sense, the master of decorum, of propriety and of pride, a sovereign who did not fructify his century, but only reaped what his predecessor had sown. She gave the lie to what seems almost a law, namely, that in this age man leads and not woman. The King called her *"ma Solidité."* She might have worn a crown before all the world, but she preferred her widow's veil. She kept her old name and craved power without pomp. Through all the variations of fashion, she stuck to her woolen dress of brown or black worsted.

The coarsely organized good old Liselotte was no match for this woman. Her homely and limited understanding failed before this highly developed mind. But Liselotte did not even use the little brains she had in order to understand the Queen, but continued to insult her and believe and spread the most stupid gossip.

In Madame de Maintenon's letters there is seldom mention of Liselotte; and what little there is is full of goodwill, although, as the following very clearly testifies, she knew what the latter thought of her: "She has characteristics that ought to make her happy. She hates me and yet

shows more consideration for me than I deserve." If these two had had a common ground where they could meet, they might have known each other better; but they were totally different. Madame de Maintenon pondered her every move. Liselotte never stopped to reflect. She was impulsive and unable to think straight when moved by any strong emotion. Impatient with her chaplain, she interrupted the offering of the mass with the energetic exclamation: "A lot of monkish nonsense!" When Leibnitz visited her she had this to say of the philosopher: "From all that I have seen and heard of Herr Leibnitz he evidently has a great mind and is a very pleasant gentleman. It is rare that scholars are clean, don't stink, and can understand a joke."

The King still remained ungracious. When she wanted to speak to him there was but the usual way of the audience. Her husband often asked her to "love him less, for God's sake, because it annoyed him." The King gave the command of the Palatine expedition to the Grand Dauphin, who thus achieved an easy fame. Orléans was left in Paris, where he led a scandalous life. Liselotte's favorite son, the Duke of Chartres, was ruining himself in the depraved society of his father. Liselotte writes: "They live a life that is positively shameful." And her husband, now completely changed into a woman, scattered the money of her inheritance, buying officers' posts in the army to reward his boys, because they had "amused him in many ways that were not strictly honorable."

Among all these troubles she had the good fortune to prevent her daughter from marrying the royal bastard de Maine, an affair that threatened to occur. The limping fellow married a Bourbon-Condé. Six years later her young Liselotte married Carl Leopold of Lorraine. Her mother has left us this drastic description of her: "She

has a good skin but her features are all ugly. She has an ugly nose, a big mouth, drawn eyes, and an insipid expression, and her complexion is nothing to rave about." These physiognomical traits are to be seen in the Hapsburg line after Maria Theresa.

It was not love that prompted Monsieur to reconcile himself with his wife shortly before his death in 1701. It was the fate of his son, whom the King wished to see ruined in debauchery just like his father. The War of the Spanish Succession came about, and still the Duke of Chartres was given no commission. His father went to see about it, and the quarrel was so violent, that dinner was announced earlier than usual in order to part the brothers. Two days later he died of heart failure. "I worked for thirty years to win him," Liselotte wrote. "Now that I have succeeded, he is dead."

She began to fear that that with which she had been frequently threatened during the last fifteen years would be carried out. Saint-Simon relates that she went about crying: "No convent! Let me not hear anyone mention convent to me!" And the very woman whose hatred she feared saved her. Her son visited her bearing a message, saying that it "now seemed the right time to be reconciled with the King." Madame de Maintenon herself appeared shortly thereafter.

At first Liselotte denied the accusations for which Madame de Maintenon gently reproved her. She had never written anything scurrilous concerning the Queen. Then she began to cry, and Madame de Maintenon thereupon "told me many nice things about myself and promised me her friendship, and then we kissed each other." She was warned to be quite frank with the King. So she was. She confessed her many letters, but the King pretended to know nothing of the matter, and laughed when

she told him that she would never have hated Madame de Maintenon if she had not loved him so much, and if she had not believed that the Queen urged him to withdraw his favor from her. The King showed himself to be very generous. He not only endowed her son, but endowed her too, and very bountifully, for she had inherited nothing from her husband except a distant estate which brought in very little.

Liselotte suspected that the sun would not shine very long. She simply couldn't bear Madame de Maintenon, and the latter realized it. Liselotte's politeness gave her away. "Some people can control their feelings. I have not the art. I am too natural and can never manage to conceal pain or joy." Her excessive politeness revealed that she was only simulating friendship. Madame de Maintenon remarked it but let it pass. Liselotte however could not let it pass and so a few weeks later the Queen's visit was not repeated, while the King remained polite but reserved, and the highest of all distinctions, the free entrance to the King's *cabinet particulier,* was not restored to her.

The widow had very few pleasures left: her correspondence with her German friends, her visits to the theatre, the pleasures of her table, and her splendid collection of coins. During the war when Louis XIV sustained the greatest defeat at Höchstadt, Liselotte "had lost the list of prisoners, but did not recall seeing more than one familiar name." She called the lost battle a "bother," and that was all it meant to her. The world did not begin to interest her until her son succeeded to the Duke of Vendôme's place in the Italian sector of the war. Now the defeat before Turin which drove the French out of Lombardy, "deeply affected her soul," but largely because no one would listen to her son's advice. The French army had been worsted and her son wounded, only because he had to

follow "the other generals' damned plan." But her son was brave, and so she forgave Prince Eugene and Hapsburg.

A year later, her son was victorious in Spain, she became the mother of a hero, and all Paris celebrated in her honor. But when the heroic Duke of Orléans returned there was no triumphal procession for him, and the reason, which Liselotte refused to believe, was said to be that he planned to carve a kingdom for himself out of Languedoc and Navarre, with the help of England. Liselotte lent her ear to the gossip which connected the lack of a triumphal arch to a careless word from her son about Madame de Maintenon.

In 1714 the King was seventy-one. He would not live long enough to give his realm over to his great-grandson. All his grandchildren and sons had died in the last four years—Louis of Bourbon of apoplexy, the Grand Dauphin of smallpox, the Duke of Burgundy of scarlet fever, the Duke of Berry of measles . . . while on the walls of the Palais Royal, where Philippe Orléans lived, placards appeared stating that the very best poisons could be bought here, and that there was a lottery here, also this last Liselotte explained as meaning that "my son lives with his daughter, like Lot."

Liselotte loved the King more than ever, now that he was in the midst of misfortunes. "Only Madame will not abandon me," he said to the Queen. Shortly thereafter he lay on his deathbed, and gathering the crying woman into his arms, wished her life-long happiness. On September 1st, 1715, she did not think "she would outlive it." The King was dead.

Liselotte was the mother of the regent. Madame de Maintenon retired to Saint-Cyr, the institution for girls which she had founded. She no longer appeared in Liselotte's letters. But it was with her in mind that the Pala-

tine Princess wrote: "France has been ruled by women altogether too long. It isn't necessary that I should now do my share of ruling. I don't want to be the cause of drawing upon my son similar criticism. I shall not mix myself in any political matter, so that I may become an example to my son's wife and to his daughters to do likewise. Thus I shall open my son's eyes to the necessity of allowing no woman, no matter who she may be, to reign in his stead."

But there seemed to be no danger of this, as far as the regent was concerned. He had too many women, and showed no inclination to "be a man." He was impolite, spoke out bluntly, and without beating about the bush confessed that he had slept with women whom he did not even love. He did not know what it meant to be discreet. "A hundred times I have told him that I can't get over the fact that women run after him. They really ought to run away from him. But he laughs, and says: 'You don't know the debauched women of today. That's exactly what they want, to have people know that they've been slept with.' "

Liselotte loved her son, and he loved her. "We gossip together like two good friends." He was a fine ruler, only his life and his regency were made trying to him by his brood of illegitimate children and all the hosts of relatives his bastards brought him. They roused the country to rebellion against him, and threatened to kill him. Liselotte began to hate France. And at the time of the bankruptcy of Law, the hatred of France culminated in an attempt to storm the Palais Royal.

Liselotte concluded that in all the six years of her son's regency, she did not have as many pleasures as in one day during the time of the King. "If they ever find out in Germany how the noblewomen live here, then, with your

passion to imitate everything French, the whole country will go to ruin." She must have cut a strange figure among all her relatives, daughters-in-law and granddaughters. The old Liselotte grew more and more conscious of her Germanic origin. She was homesick. "I am worried when I hear that people no longer speak German in Germany. I am afraid that if the foreign tongue is adopted, the old honesty, loyalty and faith will be lost."

Once before she had undertaken her own cure when she was sick, despite the counsel of the court doctors, and the astonishment and fear of the court. She had treated herself with home remedies according to her own ideas, and she had cured herself. Now, however, she was too weak to defend herself against the administration of the two medical panaceas which she hated: purging and blood-letting. The weaker she became the more she was treated with one or the other of these remedies. She realized that she was dying, not of her illness, but of her cure. It was too late, however, when the doctors finally gave in and confessed that they had mistaken her "temperament."

There was only one thing more that she could do, and that was to see to it that, after her death, her body should not be opened. At least, once dead, the doctors would leave her alone.

She died on the eighth of December of the year of our Lord 1722, at the age of seventy.

CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN

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Marie Eleonore, the daughter of the Great Elector of Brandenburg, was pretty, amiable and destitute of common sense. Her most dignified occupation was the preparation of salves for her complexion, and, next to that, fortune-telling. Beyond this she was a total idiot, whose existence was passed amidst dwarfs, monstrosities, fools, parasites and gossiping servants.

She was a timid creature, given to constant crying. She sopped her love in tears. Her husband took it genially enough with the smiling condescension of an intelligent person towards a mild imbecile. When he was fed up with her he fled to the quiet of battlefields and debauchery. This was Gustavus Adolphus, the Snow-king, as Emperor Ferdinand called him.

He was a kind-hearted giant, a blond, mead-drinking god out of the Norse myths. There were times, however, when, roused to fits of passion, he plunged into battle with the fury of a maniac. This was a trait totally out of keeping with his age, when sovereigns no longer went to war at the head of their troops.

But Gustavus Adolphus was also a cultured and witty man who did not deceive himself into thinking that he was anything but a scourge to his land, as are all significant monarchs. So he writes: "When God wishes to shower love on a people, he gives them mediocre rulers with only average souls." He adds, however, cleverly: "Mediocrity has other evils in its train, but these are of a

lesser nature compared to those which follow the rule of great sovereigns."

The daughter of Gustavus Adolphus was only six years old when the King fell at the battle of Lützen in 1632. The astrologers had predicted the birth of a prince when Marie Eleonore was pregnant with Christina and they were not very far from right, for the dark, noisy, hairy creature that was born resembled a boy rather than a girl; and all her life, inwardly as well as outwardly, she remained a strange, androgynous creature.

The King had frequently insisted in his letters that his stupid wife be kept from taking part in the administration of the country, and that Christina be brought up as a lad so that some day she might wear the crown as a perfect prince. The King himself chose her tutors, and so well did he choose that Christina as an old woman was still able to describe them: "One of them was present at all of the King's pleasures, and was his confidant and companion in all his escapades and debauches. He excelled in bodily exercises and was a cavalier beyond compare, but at the same time an ignoramus, with a violent temper and addicted to women and wine even until his death." This teacher's assistant was likewise a drunkard and a doctor of theology, an honest man but not much else.

When the King died, his widow, one may be sure, did not let so remarkable an opportunity for extended weeping escape her. She presented Europe with the unique spectacle of a sorrow lasting years instead of the customary weeks or months. She had the windows nailed down and the walls draped with black cloth, and shutting herself off from the world, sat moaning and howling amidst burning tapers. Three times each day she kissed the golden box which contained the heart of her dead husband, and three times a day there was a general lamentation in

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which the dwarfs and buffoons joined. Christina too was forced to take part in all this.

Every day when Christina was called to her lessons her mother burst into a storm of tears, seeking by every subterfuge to keep the child with her in the black room. Even at night she would not part with her daughter, but made her sleep in the same bed.

For three years this lasted and then finally the child was relieved of her torture when the Regent Oxenstierna returned from Germany and put an end to the mourning. The widow cried on, it is true, but in a distant castle, where she could no longer disturb anyone.

Now Christina suffered only from the insanity of her tutor who was determined to make out of her a "good Swedish maiden." His methods were no less crude than remarkable.

Through its representative Parliament the whole Swedish nation worked out a plan for the up-bringing of the child, and breathlessly watched its development. In particular the unlettered peasantry, awed by the miracles of learning and convinced that they could secure a great sovereign only by having her instructed in all the higher and more abstruse branches, insisted upon Latin and mathematics, French and English, Greek and Hebrew, and astronomy too. She was apt and learnt quickly—almost as if it were part of her games.

She learnt riding and marching and all other military matters. And she learnt, also, how to govern. At the age of eight she spoke eight languages, could argue in Latin as well as a Lutheran Bishop, and was able to write aphorisms on woman. At fourteen she could ride horseback like a man, curse and drink like a trooper, shoot a running rabbit, and sleep comfortably on the hard ground.

The ambition to raise her as a boy had succeeded be-

yond the hopes of her governors. She had become a monstrosity. She never washed her hands, or combed her hair. Her left shoulder was lame and she herself was undeveloped, short, runty. She might have been a boy whose voice was changing. She displayed all the cockiness of a young guttersnipe to whom life is a perpetual carnival and people are here only to be made fools of.

In the fragment of her autobiography, where she has much to say in praise of herself, as was the fashion of the day, she nevertheless indulges in a self-reproach for having neglected all too much the decorum of her sex. But she adds that she would do the same again and even more, "for I am convinced that I would have done better had I emancipated myself completely from these feminine conventions; that is the only weakness with which I reproach myself, for I was not born to it, and I should have followed my own whims and my own nature instead of trying to follow theirs."

Christina at eighteen, that is, at her coronation, possessed knowledge, intellect, understanding and bravery. The only thing she lacked was the very thing which the peasantry held most in respect: a sense of morality.

Christina had been educated to play the part of a European monarch, and therein lay the cause of misunderstanding between herself and her people. They were not Europeans, for they had no intellectual culture at all, but only a moral-theological discipline overlying a strange growth of religious superstitions.

True, there was a University, founded in 1476 at Upsala, but in the reign of Gustavus Adolphus it was no more than a school where reading and writing were studied, and which the King was trying hard to raise to a higher position. When he died, the University had a

medical faculty consisting of one professor who was more than ample for the student body.

The peasants lived in huts and went about in rags, while in the palaces the nobility ate beneath a tent erected to keep spiderwebs from falling into their coarse foods. At the wedding of Gustavus Adolphus the service was made of bronze and borrowed at that. Travellers reported that the only luxury the people, from King to peasant, indulged in was the pleasure of getting drunk.

And it was this nation where generals could not sign their names that now had a Queen versed in all arts and all branches of learning. This nation, starved and in rags, had a sovereign with a taste for fine furniture, pictures and statues. While the people believed in the devil, their ruler was a pagan philosopher who believed in nothing, not even in her royal birth. She recognized only merit: "There are peasants born as princes, and kings who come into the worlds as peasants. Among the kings are found rascals just as among other mortals."

She once thus introduced a talented Swede before the Senate: "Salvius would be a capable man if he were of the nobility." She nominated him senator and envoy. The Swedes were scandalized. But they had educated their queen for Florence, not for Stockholm.

Oxenstierna, who had been Regent for her while she was still under age, was surprised to discover his master, in his ill-bred pupil. He wished to continue the war. She wanted peace. And she forced him to the treaty of Westphalia.

One can really speak of genius when a young girl, looking more like a page, says: "Our emotions are the salt of our life. Happiness or unhappiness is dependent on our use or misuse of it." Or: "There are people to whom everything is permissible, and for whom everything suc-

ceeds." Stupidities, which such persons may be guilty of, are likely to be overrated. Only weaklings continue moaning over past mistakes. Strong people "never forget that between intelligence and foolishness there is so small a difference that in view of the shortness of our lives it is not worthy of attention." We must live forward, just as we speak and think ahead. "The past counts for nothing; we must always live upon new expenditures."

These were not improvisations. She lived out her rules. We may expect an unusual career from such a woman and her life is in fact unique.

When Magnus, as a twenty-two-year-old farmer-boy caught her fancy, he became the first of a long row of favorites, and was made a count, an envoy, a major, a senator, grand-master of the royal household, and grand-treasurer. But when he fell into disgrace, she curtly called him tippler and liar.

Christina had been brought up as a man, and she had lost all feminine traits except those that are in bad repute. She did not wish to surrender herself to a man by contracting marriage, nor did she care to give birth to children. The other portions of marital experience she wished to enjoy in generous measure. In this delicate business it is noteworthy that she used only male servants and no maids whatsoever. Of those emotions which we generally describe as the noble ones and which are presumed to accompany the more sensual feelings, she displayed not a single trace, possibly on account of her nature, or perhaps because of her masculine upbringing. At any rate she had very little time to cultivate those vague sensations which spring up out of idleness. Her time was so occupied that she had barely the necessary moments to give in to her desires. Her favorites in the paucity of time allowed them, were never able to fabricate the illusion which would have

transformed them into lovers. Here were no shepherds dallying through lazy hours, but only a few brief minutes allotted to the business of satisfying an inclination.

The peace which the Swedes now enjoyed after decades of foreign wars proved more expensive than the era of strife. The fame of Christina's wisdom and artistic talent brought half of Europe's artists and scholars to Stockholm. There was founding and building, decorating and furnishing, waste and robbery. Having shut herself out from the normal feminine course of satisfying one's vanity, the twenty-year-old queen found new, strange and exceedingly costly ways of becoming recognized. Learned men were not as cheap then as they are now. Then they understood how to do business for themselves.

Those who could not go to Stockholm entered into learned correspondence with the Queen-philosopher, and were at least sure of golden necklaces and pensions. She displayed no more choice in her selection of men than she exercised in her collections of valuables such as books, paintings, medals, coins, and so forth. If a man had some little reputation in his own country, he was called famous in Sweden. Of all that court-rabble of forgotten no-accounts, pedants, charlatans and parasites only one name is worth recording: Descartes, who allowed himself to be enticed to Stockholm, where he died after three months of over-exertion. Christina had him aroused at five o'clock on wintry mornings in order to talk philosophy with him. She disputed the fifty-year-old man into his grave.

Reigning, studying, philosophizing, all left her little time for sleep. And no time to wash. Every fortnight she had her hair combed. She was one mass of evil-smelling filth. Surrounded by those who regarded her surprising intellect with flattering admirations, she was led to lose sight entirely of her physical appearance. She lost all

sense of order and discrimination. She cut up her eleven Correggios and her two Raphaels and decorated her ceiling with the pieces. She paid enormous sums for fabricated autographs and added these counterfeit documents to her library without ever looking at them. These were simply the necessary stage-setting for the rôle of an important woman. She had countless medals struck off for herself. On some of these she is represented as Minerva, on others as a winged Nike, on others still as Diana subduing ferocious animals. One huge volume contains merely the titles of all the books which sang her praise in verse or prose.

In thousands of unsolicited letters she gave undesired advice to kings and statesmen. A vagabond negro tramping through Germany is reported to her as King Abalaktus of Ethiopia. Christina begins the study of Ethiopian and writes a Latin letter to the King addressed simply "Germany." Of course it never reached the poor devil. A copy, however, is preserved in the archives and begins thus: "Consanguineo nostro carissimo, eadem gratia Æthiopum regi," and terminates with an assurance of her good will and her desire to receive a reply.

The Swedes awaited the marriage of their Queen hoping this would restore her good sense and lighten her onerous rule. But Christina declared she would rather give up her throne than marry. She was begged to keep her throne and she consented upon the promise that no one should ever speak to her of marriage again. The poor Swedes were shortly thereafter smitten with a worse plague than the Queen's cultural proclivities. They encountered her taste for amusement.

Christina now underwent a crisis. She had attempted to be completely spirit, and her body revolted against such mistreatment. Fever shook her sleepless frame, abcesses broke out on her skin, she had fainting spells from which

it was often feared she would not awake. The court physicians did their best with the medicines of their time, purging and blood-letting, but all in vain.

Then came Monsieur Bourdelot from France. He was the son of a provincial barber-surgeon, but pretended to be a doctor, a fact which his colleagues denied, although he understood his cups and his clysters and his Latin too, as well as they did. But Bourdelot was more than a doctor. He believed only in making his fortune and he knew that he had brains enough for that. Today we would call him a ladies' specialist. For this profession he was well suited. He was always in a good mood, and knew a thousand feminine tricks from toilet waters to madrigals and from amusing mystifications to the planning of clever parties. He told women what they liked to hear and what they themselves lacked the courage or the inducement to say of themselves.

For Christina he had the charm which freed her. It was no more than a word. In Paris, he said, people laugh at learned women. They are considered funny. He took the scholarly volumes from the table and threw them into the fire. And he expressed the opinion that the same ought to be done with their authors.

Christina took to the cure at once. She was twenty-five years old and had lost seven years of pleasure. She immediately set herself to the task of making it up. In no time the most learned court in Europe was transformed into the most amusing. The scholars remained, but to them were added singers, dancers and comedians, imported from Italy and France. Christina herself danced in the ballet. She took pleasure in forcing Meibomius to sing in his cracked voice the Greek texts which he had deciphered, and Naudé had to dance on his old quaking legs the antique dances which he had described. She no

longer took part in learned debates. She put off state business. She ceased giving audiences. She cancelled meetings of the Senate, saying that she had a new ballet to study.

Bourdelot was inexhaustible in making new discoveries for the pleasure of the Queen. He countermanded a learned meeting which his patient declared she must attend, and to secure his order he gave her a laxative which kept her within a few steps of her cabinet. He understood the use of both delicate and brutal methods. Four weeks after his arrival in Stockholm he was the ruling voice in Swedish politics with the full consent of the trusting and thankful Queen. The Swedes might have consoled themselves if that were all, but the little savings made by niggardly dealing with the scholars were spent five times over in lavish expenditures for the pleasures prescribed by the *maître de plaisir.*

The people's representatives declared that the Queen's belated discovery of her youth was sheer madness. The scholars Bochart, Vossius and Huet declared to the world that she had fallen under the spell of a charlatan, had gone insane and given herself up completely to *ludicra et inania,* and had the audacity to defend herself by declaring that it was more important to amuse oneself than to know things. The echo of the voice of these three learned scholars reverberated back to Sweden. It was bad enough to have a spendthrift for ruler, but formerly at least she had been a noted Queen, famous for her wisdom, now she was not only a wastrel but in addition infamous and ludicrous. The Swedish people suffered more from the moral than from the financial bankruptcy.

The floor of the treasury was visible. An envoy could not go to his destination because there was no money to pay his travelling expenses. The servants had not been paid for two years. Christina, forced to undertake a very

necessary voyage, had to pawn her silverware for four thousand thaler. The tax screws were put on but not a groat was forthcoming. Bourdelot dared not appear on the streets without a strong escort. Realizing that he could not be kept any longer, Christina, in the summer of 1653, loaded him with presents and sent him to Mazarin, who gave him an abbey. Bourdelot made as good an abbot as he had once made a doctor and by his letters kept Christina well posted on the latest Parisian gossip.

Scarcely had the poor Swedes begun to breathe freely again when a new fancy of their Queen struck them dumb with amazement. On the eleventh of February, 1654, Christina announced to the assembled Senate that she was abdicating in favor of her cousin Karl Gustav. It would be useless, she said, to attempt to dissuade her. The best thing would be to help her carry out her plans. In anticipation of leaving the country she had already had her effects packed.

A contemporary historian reports that the assembly was thrown into such disorder and so completely stricken with fear that no one knew what to reply to Her Majesty. There was no precedent for such a step excepting the abdication of Charles the Fifth who when old and weak had retired into a convent. Old age and illness were good reasons for such a step, which would cut off a sovereign from the people whom God had entrusted to her care, but Christina had no reason aside from the fact that she was bored.

This was scandalous in the light of the political doctrines of the time, which declared that people and sovereign were bound to each by their respective duties, and neither subjects nor ruler were free to leave. Christina was mutinying. "Good God," exclaimed Vossius, writing to his countryman Heinsius, "in what strange times we

live! Queens wish to lay down their scepters and live as private citizens for themselves and for the muses!"

Christina was aware of the consternation produced by her action. On February 28 she writes thus to the French envoy at Stockholm: "I realize that the scene I put on was not composed according to the rules of theatrical composition. The strong, the virile, the powerful always displease an audience which has subsided into a lethargy. But I am not disturbed over the lack of applause." Perhaps the applause of Sweden meant nothing to Christina, but the applause of Europe was another matter. That was a stage on which she wanted to play a big rôle. The Swedes, however, wearied her. They were a coarse, dull, poor set of uncultured people and she was a queen without money. Under such boring circumstances, duty meant nothing to Christina.

Many tears were shed at the festive ceremony of her abdication, and the people willingly granted her what she desired. Her demands were by no means modest. She insisted upon domains and cities sufficient to yield an income of half a million livres. The Senate not only gave it to her but wished to add a luxurious fleet so that she could go wherever she wished. The people, however, insisted that she spend her income in Sweden. Christina was wild with fear and rage. She left suddenly before the day set for her departure, foregoing fleet and parting festivities, taking French leave, as it were, like an adventuress.

She had sent all her movables ahead—her collection of paintings, her books, her gold and silver, her furniture; and shortly before her departure she even took the stones out of the crown. Her successor moved into an empty palace. Two carpets, an old bed and a mangled crown robbed of all its jewels were all he found.

Christina was on her way to Flanders, to the army of

Condé, whose forces she intended to join as a general. No sooner had she reached Norwegian territory, than with a shout of joy, she abandoned her following, cut her hair, and put on men's clothing and riding boots. When she landed in Denmark she carried a pistol in her belt and a rifle slung over her shoulder. Four noblemen and a few servants constituted her escort.

It was a travelling circus with stops and performances at every court of Europe. Occasionally in order to make a greater showing a following in gala uniforms was rented. She made dozens of festive entrances, while mobs gathered and pushed and crowded each other to see her and hear her addresses. If there were scholars in the town, meetings were called at which she presided and lectured on philosophy.

She did not, however, forget the lessons that Bourdelot had taught her. She mixed the humorous with the serious. At every festivity she included a comic intermezzo of clowning. When mobs ran after her carriage she turned around and made faces at them. Or else she changed her costume within her carriage so that she passed unrecognized. Sometimes she interrupted the ceremonious address of some pedant to crack a juicy joke or perform a little dance. The hisses of the loges were drowned by the applause of the galleries. During the month she spent in Brussels, she completely abandoned the rôle of queen. Dressed as a page she amused herself and all the people with the buffooneries and antics of a new Eulenspiegel. Then she became Queen again and travelled on, stopping at Hamburg, at Antwerp and at Innsbruck.

It was in this last city that she created a new sensation by repeating publicly a ceremony that she had secretly gone through in Brussels on Christmas eve of 1654. She was converted to Catholicism. One can understand that it

cost Rome a pretty penny and no little effort to win the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus back to the Pope. Christina was of course willing to play any big rôle where she would be sure to cut a figure. If necessary she would do it at her own cost. In this case there were many enticing rewards, including money and the valuable protection of the Church.

The question as to Christina's sincerity did not come up for discussion at Rome. The political effect, however, received a great deal of consideration. The things which Christina later wrote about the Catholic faith are so exaggerated that they repell credence. As a matter of fact we have any number of expressions on her part, which convince us that the matter of choice of faith was totally indifferent to her. In one place she says that she was converted because the sermons of the pastors bored her. On the very day of her conversion at Innsbruck she was promised the performance of a comedy in the afternoon. She opined: "It is quite in keeping, my Lords, that a farce be followed by a comedy."

The "farce" at Innsbruck was followed by the pompous and elaborate celebration of Christina's entry into Rome, every detail of which was minutely supervised by the officers of the rites. A great number of gorgeously arrayed servants drove the cardinals, prelates, barons and envoys of Rome in carriages drawn by six horses. These preceded the Queen. All the vehicles were lavishly decorated. The Governor of Rome rode in a carriage made of silver enriched with gold and had a retinue of forty, magnificently arrayed. Every Roman Lady had an escort of thirty-six men. For six months the Roman tailors had worked on the costumes for the cortège. The papal office expended one and a half million thaler in staging this lavish affair.

On the 21st of December, 1655, cannon thunder and

trumpet blasts announced the beginning of the parade. The troops paraded by. All shops were closed and the entire population was out to see the sight. They gazed until their eyes popped out of their heads—and what they saw was a small, rather humpbacked creature, decked out in furs, riding astride a prancing white horse, and accompanied by two cardinals. She came from the Porta del Popolo, was received by the high clergy at the gates of Saint Peter's and finally was led before the Pope. He welcomed her graciously and to her thanks for the marvellous reception replied that her conversion was being celebrated in heaven with far more elaborate festivals than she saw here on earth. If Saint Peter's successor had taken off his tiara and put it on her tousled wig, Christina would not have been surprised. What was a Pope to her, she, whose conversion was being celebrated in heaven!

The Church was under the impression that it had tied this northern woman to its triumphal chariot, but, as it happened, the Curia was soon dancing to her tune. And she knew how to pipe a tune better than she knew how to pray with her rosary, that rosary the Pope had given her, pleading that she might tell off one bead with an Ave, now, before the people, "for which she would receive a greater reward, in heaven, than for a whole rosary in the silence of her chamber."

But Christina prayed neither openly nor privately, and if she did go once to Mass, it was only to cause a commotion. When she was spied with her guard of cardinals, a crowd of idlers gathered and the street was soon full of uproar and brawls.

Though no longer a queen she still insisted that she be treated with all the ceremony due her former estate. Christina followed her maxim that patience was a virtue only for cowards and weaklings, and as a result there were

new quarrels and squabbles every day. Was there dissension between herself and Cardinal di Medici? Nothing simpler. Christina had a cannon dragged before the door of his palace and fired the first shot with her own hands.

As a financial guide, Christina adopted the following short and simple rule: "There is a kind of extravagance which is equal to thrift." Her household was managed so carelessly that immense sums mysteriously disappeared in its disorderly functioning. On the way to Rome, large parts of her collections were stolen. She replaced them with new expenditures. Meanwhile Sweden, embroiled in difficulties at home and abroad, was incapable of paying the full amount of her pension and soon stopped it altogether. It is not to be wondered at that, within six months of her arrival in Rome, Christina was competely at the mercy of her usurious creditors.

She turned to the Pope for help and the latter generously allowed her a pension of two thousand thaler provided she would behave. The provision was too much for Christina. She pawned all her remaining jewelry for the sum of ten thousand ducats and starred herself in a new play which brought her a last big success. She took passage to Marseilles.

No doubt Mazarin had his excellent reasons for receiving the Ambulatory Queen, as she was nicknamed, with royal honors. The magistrate of Marseilles gave her the keys of the city, and all the high dignitaries, both civil and clerical, bowed to the ground before her, while poets sang her praise in verses which declared her to be the tenth muse, and scholars in long speeches addressed her as the Northern Sibyl.

The Duc de Guise received her at Lyons in the name of the King and invited her to Compiègne where the court was. He wrote to a friend that he was amused and de-

lighted with "this most extraordinary person." During the journey to Compiègne, Christina was very careful in her demeanor, and she really could be a very charming person when she was so disposed. Then suddenly she let loose. The Grande Mademoiselle who had invited her to a comedy, reports of her: "She swore by God and the devil, crossed her legs, even threw them over the arms of her chair, and in general assumed postures such as I have never seen anyone assume before, except those two buffoons Trivelin and Jodelet."

To de Montpensier, Christina revealed her greatest longing, which was to command an army corps: "for she would not be happy until she had achieved that."

When she was in good humor, people forgot her hump and her dirty hands, begrimed with filth and fat, her coarse riding boots, and her queer half-feminine, half-masculine wig, always tousled and crooked. They would find her full of charm and wit. Often they were agreeably surprised and frankly admired her. Even the young King was delighted. He permitted her the use of his servants as maids, and this often at the most inconvenient hours, as Madame de Motte reports.

Christina ventured to give the King advice. For instance, she urged him to marry Marie Mancine, with whom he was in love. The Queen Mother hated the Mancine and at once gave notice to the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus to leave. The King hired a carriage to take her to Rome. Christina invited Ninon to accompany her in order to be presented to the Pope. Ninon refused.

Pestilence had broken out in Rome, so the party interrupted their journey and spent several months in Northern Italy. Finally, instead of proceeding to Rome, she returned to France and reached Fontainebleau in 1657, where she was given permission to take up her residence

in the royal palace. The absent court sent her word to remain there pending further disposition.

Christina was now thirty-one years old. She was a strange, jolly creature, ever ready to grasp the least opportunity to attract attention. Today we would call her a publicity-seeker. She lived from day to day, nonchalantly contracting debts, a robust and happy spendthrift. What she lived through in the life of her soul and conscience, no one knows. Perhaps she had no inner life. We have only the visible expressions of her temperament, her humor, her intelligence.

Up to this point she had never done anything human enough to enable us to render a judgment concerning her. Now, however, she did do something and the world which had hitherto looked upon her with merriment and surprise turned away from her with horror. To the end of her life she never understood why her fellowmen were so incensed. Her intelligence was simply not able to comprehend it. And after all she had only her own intelligence, even to cope with the incomprehensible. So we cannot blame her. She acted justly in her own eyes when, without any sentimentality or compunction whatsoever, she condemned a man to death, and never once in her life was she able to shed a tear of regret for her deed.

Two Italian noblemen had accompanied her to France. The one, Marquis Monaldeschi, was her former lover, the other, Count Sentinelli, her present one. It seems that the jealous Marquis wrote ugly things about Christina in letters wherein he imitated Sentinelli's handwriting. That is about all we know concerning the origin of the affair, though, taking into consideraton the period and its lesser sensitivity in regard to punishment and greater sensitivity in regard to the crime, we might be inclined to suspect a more serious offense for such an expiation.

On a November day of the year 1657 Christina called Father Le Bel of the Trinitarians of Fontainebleau, and after pledging him to secrecy gave him a sealed package to keep until such time as she demanded its return. Four days later she sent for the Prior again. The latter took the package and repaired to the castle, where he met the Queen in a gallery, engaged in an amiable conversation with Monaldeschi. Sentinelli was with them, and there were also two Italian soldiers a short distance away. Le Bel subsequently published an account of the things he saw and experienced in that Galérie des Cerfs. It is the only document of an eyewitness that we have in this affair.

The Prior approached the Queen, who had no sooner observed him than she at once changed her tone and demeanor. In a loud voice she requested the package, opened it, took some letters from it and held them up before Monaldeschi's face. "Do you recognize these!" she cried. The Marquis grew pale and trembled. At first he denied all knowledge, then he confessed and throwing himself down before the Queen, pleaded for mercy. Sentinelli and the two soldiers drew their swords.

A clock strikes one of the afternoon.

Monaldeschi jumps up, still pleading, and follows the Queen, who is walking off calmly and unconcernedly, leaning on the round knob of her ebony cane. For a whole hour she permits him to go on. She herself says not a word until finally turning to Le Bel, she requests him "to take care of this unfortunate man, whom I now leave in your hands in order that you may prepare his soul for death." Le Bel falls on his knees and prays for the other's life. But the Queen goes into her apartment where she can be heard talking and laughing.

Monaldeschi flings himself at the door behind which

the Queen and Sentinelli have disappeared. Here he remains, crying and howling down the corridor.

After some time the Count reappears and with tears in his eyes, says to Monaldeschi: "Marquis, think of God and your soul, for you must die." The Marquis sends Le Bel to the Queen. The Prior begs her in the name of our Saviour's wounds. Christina, unmoved, replies that she is sorry to be unable to grant his request.

Two o'clock strikes.

The Marquis begins his confession. He interrupts himself. The fear of death cuts his breath short. He cannot speak, but he howls, howls like a dog. Christina's almoner happens to walk down the corridor and the Marquis throws himself upon the cleric and beseeches him to intercede with the Queen. The almoner enters the Queen's apartment but is unsuccessful. Sentinelli also tries to dissuade the Queen.

Christina, however, far from feeling either compassion or hatred, jests over the "poltroon" who is afraid of death, and finally losing her patience she orders that he be wounded to make him "hurry up with his confession." The order is carried out by Sentinelli, who aims a blow with his sword at the unarmed Marquis. The latter parries it with his hand. Three fingers fall to the ground.

Monaldeschi receives absolution and the slaughter begins. He is wearing a coat of mail, so blows are struck at his face, his neck and his hands. The almoner goes to the door. The human sacrifice drags himself over to the cleric, supporting himself against the wall. He begs him to try only once more to dissuade the Queen. The almoner slips out and the door is shut. Sentinelli finally pierces the butchered Marquis' throat. He expires.

The clock has just struck four. The horrible execution has lasted three hours.

When Mazarin heard of the murder of Monaldeschi, he sent word through the Commandant Chanut that Christina was to beware of appearing in Paris, on account of the fury of the people. Christina's answer, a hastily scribbled note, written in burning rage, full of ink spots and almost illegible, has been preserved. It follows:

"My dear Cousin Chanut, who is one of the best friends I have, will inform you that I shall take into consideration all your advice. If he failed to frighten me into a panic, as he was no doubt ordered to do, it is not the fault of his eloquence, which is considerable, but due, to tell the truth, to the fact that we Northerners are not easily perturbed. We are a bit wild, as you know.

"You will have to excuse me for the non-success of your communication. I would be glad to do anything in my power to please you, except to be frightened. You know that after the age of thirty, one no longer fears wizards. And truth to tell I find it much easier to murder people than to fear them.

"As for my action toward Monaldeschi, you do not mind my saying that, if I had not done it, I would not go to bed this evening until I had accomplished it. I assure you that I have no cause to regret my actions. I hope this explanation of my attitude in the matter will satisfy you. If it does not, I shall not be in the least disturbed and I shall still remain all my life your most affectionate friend, Christina."

Christina still had thirty years to live. She resumed her traveling kingdom, but she no longer amused anyone. When her presence became annoying, the ghost of Monaldeschi was raised. She could not understand why such ado was made over a bagatelle and used to say that she pitied a century that "was so low as to become excited over a servant put to death by the order of the Queen."

In her maxims she wrote: "Punishment should be meted out according to the formal rules of justice, whenever possible. But when that is impossible, one must punish anyhow, by whatever method seems best."

Twenty-two years after those three hours in the Galérie des Cerfs, Christina found occasion to write this letter: "Please tell this Heinsius that all those trifles he still scribbles concerning Monaldeschi seem to me as laughable and as impudent as they actually are. And you may say that I give all of Westphalia full permission to consider Monaldeschi absolutely guiltless. Everything said about this matter leaves me perfectly unconcerned."

She not only wrote this. It was really so. The dead Monaldeschi never troubled Christina's sleep.

The Pope did what he could to inject a little order into the life of his royal godchild. He paid her a pension of 12,000 thaler and gave her the young Cardinal Dece Azzolini as intendant, a gift which delighted Christina, for he was "young, handsome, clever, learned and skilful, and almost always embroiled in some romantic adventure."

Sweden however still failed to pay her pension, and the Pope's allowance did not suffice for her undisciplined, extravagant household. In order to establish herself financially she then entered the field of politics. She sent Sentinelli to Vienna to deliver the following message to the Emperor: "Since King Karl Gustav does not pay me my pension of 200,000 thaler, I beg the Emperor to give me 20,000 men under the command of Monte. With their help I intend to conquer Swedish Pomerania, where I have many partisans. The revenues of Pomerania are to be mine as long as I live, and after my death the province shall belong to the Empire."

In Vienna it was expected that war with Sweden would follow the former Queen's proposal. Meanwhile her successor died, leaving a four-year-old son, Karl XI. Christina set out at once for Sweden thinking she might wrest the crown from the immature heir.

In Hamburg, friendly advisers pleaded with her not to

attempt to set foot on Swedish soil. But Christina, disregarding their warning, returned to her native country which she entered not as supplicant but as ruler and straightway demanded the crown in case little Karl should die. The Regents, however, forced her to sign a final abdication, threatening to withdraw every bit of her pension if she did not. She signed it in a fury, her pen tearing through the parchment.

She left, but a year later returned and this time had to flee at night under cover of the fog.

In Bremen she visited the Swedish camp under the command of Wrangel, who had served under her father. She donned a man's uniform and took charge of a manœuvre in which everything went topsy-turvy. Old Wrangel laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. For Christina, however, this affair was a complete proof of her military genius, which she was shortly thereafter to offer to Poland.

John Casimir had just abdicated the Polish throne, and Christina had succeeded in winning the Pope to support her candidature. The papal brief frightened the Polish Parliament. They sought for excuses. But Christina had answers to all their objections. She would be a King and not a Queen. She would command their army as a man. What more could they want?

And as for Monaldeschi, she had no intention of justifying herself before the Poles for the death of an Italian. Besides, had she not allowed him all the Sacraments he was capable of receiving before his death? As to the accusation of violence, she did not think that a few blows given to a servant made her incapable of becoming a ruler. "If that is really the case, the Poles will never find a King." The Poles finally refused and Christina wandered on.

Once more she began to dicker with Vienna for the con-

quest of Pomerania, but the Emperor ended by refusing. She turned to France with the suggestion that advantage be taken of Sweden's present difficulties to force her to repeal her anti-Catholic laws. She thought the sum mentioned would repay her for her advice.

She complained to Rome that she was not being treated as a Queen. Thrifty Innocence XI answered by stopping her pension. She threatened to lead the guards against him. The Pope paid no attention to her threat. The Roman mob disputed as to whether the short, fat, humpback was a man or a woman.

The Unpitying Director now gave the first sign of the approaching end of the show. The curtain was about to come down. Christina ran at once to her wardrobe in order to dress herself for the apotheosis of death. Her only worry was her costume. It had to be in the very latest fashion, of rich materials and unusual cut: half cloak and half dress, of white brocade, with gold-embroidered flowers, gold buttons and gold fringes. The costume was ready on Christmas eve of 1688. She put it on and paraded up and down before her little court. She approved of it. Now she was ready to die.

On April 19, 1689, her deformed body was dressed in the white brocade robe with its gold-embroidery, a crown was put on her head and a scepter in her hand, and thus she was seated in her best carriage and taken to the parish church of Santa Dorotea, where she was laid out in state.

Three hundred wax candles fought against the gloom of the black-draped church. In the evening, men came and put the bier on their shoulders and carried her to Saint Peter's. Artists and scholars and thousands of clerics went before her. In a violet ermine cape which was thrown over her, she seemed more queenly than she ever had before.

All the pomp of Papal Rome followed her as it had once done when she first entered the holy city.

Not only the body but the soul of this woman was deformed. She was a monstrosity of genius.

FIVE PASTELS

LOUISE DE WARENS

When the Vaudois bourgeoise left the world and her husband, she did not leave emptyhanded. Her husband remarked spitefully that his converted wife had taken along the silver and the fine linens. We refer here, however, to the more subtle and frivolous perfume of men and worldliness which surrounded her and effaced the devotional aspects of her character.

Louise first went to Evian and threw herself before the King of Sardinia; then she proceeded to Geneva, going down on her knees before Monsignor de Bernix, all this largely for the sake of presents and pensions and not a little for the theatrical effect. Besides she wanted a litter and a guard of forty men who were to accompany her to the Convent of the Order of the Visitation—not, however, for the purpose of becoming a nun, for she had absolutely no intentions of taking any vows.

As a matter of fact she soon had her own house, maid and butler, received in her boudoir such guests as the Abbé Gros, and even allowed her hand to be kissed by visitors such as de Conzié and de Senecterre and Jean-Jacques. She took walks, too, through the street of Annecy, with her tall stick surmounted by a golden knob, a present of Victor Amadeus, and it was there that Rousseau saw her for the first time on that Whitsunday.

She may have thought herself another Madame de Chantal, and indeed she might have claimed a certain relationship through the Savoy line and François de Sales —except that Madame de Chantal was devotion per-

sonified. Here in this very town a hundred years ago, she had burnt the name of Christ upon her breast with the point of a glowing iron. François de Sales wrote of her in the introduction to his treatise on the Love of God: "I hold her in the greatest esteem for she had great power over my soul."

Madame de Warens was not so fortunate as to be able to live upon a single love, like the saintly Chantal. She was too easily controlled by the importunities of her senses. She had money, yet she died in poverty. She never inspired a treatise on the love of God but she did inspire the sixth book of the Confessions and that is as immortal as de Sales' masterpiece. For that she lives today; the book is full of her. The genius who wrote it revealed her and himself completely.

"Mama," which was her appropriate name, was a rather plump woman of about thirty, with a good, soft and rather naïve heart. It is an enduring reproach to Rousseau that he would not give up his wash-woman, la Levasseur, for Mama's sake. For she had created his sensitive heart, and had been the cause of his discovery of green: *"du vert devant mes fenêtres."* [1]

It was not at les Charmettes, but in that narrow street of Annecy where Madame de Warens lived and where Rousseau learnt music, that he received the strongest impression of his life, one that lived with him forever after. It was here, in 1728, on Whitsunday, that he received that famous branch. *"Je dois me souvenir du lieu, je l'ai souvent mouillé de mes larmes et couvert de mes baisers!"* [2]

Fifty years later, shortly before his death, he recalled to his memory the picture of Madame de Warens and

[1] Green outside of my windows.

[2] I cannot easily forget the spot, for I often bathed it in my tears and covered it with kisses.

LOUISE DE WARENS,

Née en 1699.

exclaimed: *"Ah! si j'avais suffi à son cœur comme elle eût suffi au mien, quels paisibles et délicieux jours nous eussions coulés ensemble."* [1] Still it was he who had not wanted it to be. It was he who went away and left Mama alone, to cry over her lost Jean-Jacques, as well as over her fading youth and beauty, and to ruin herself in miserable speculations—the while he remained with his coarse wife.

She abandoned everything and moved to Chambéry, taking a house in the desolate suburb of Nézin, where she died, forgotten by the world. The parish priest of Lemenc, in whose church she lies buried, paid the funeral expenses of this poor woman. For poor she was in every sense of the word. She was not sufficiently pious to find complete happiness in the service of her faith, and her head was too calm and reasonable ever to be carried away by her heart.

[1] "Ah! if I could have satisfied her heart as she satisfied mine, in what peaceful and delicious days we might have spent our life together."

MADAME DUBARRY

THE godliness which Christian kings assumed, and upon which they even insisted, often harmed their private lives as individual human beings. Their subjects found it hard to put up with the fact that the deified idol, far from being the epitome of all virtues, was the possessor of many vices.

That the king should have a mistress in addition to his queen the people considered altogether scandalous, not because they were so set on monogamy, but because there were always some few who were shocked and who aroused the rest. These shocked ones were generally to be found among those who had supported some other candidate as mistress and whose non-success with the king thus led to their disgrace, their envy and their hatred.

When the political leaders selected a consort for their monarch, they took into account the fact that he would make up for any deficiencies in the queen by the selection of a mistress. In the classic period of European cabinet-politics the choice of a queen was taken completely out of the king's hands.

Even his choice of a mistress was only free in the sense that he might accept or refuse any lady presented to him. He was practically prevented from choosing and finding his own mistress by his station, his dignity and his court,—especially by the latter. No courtier was willing to surrender his right of choosing the king's mistress, for through the lady he had successfully supported, he might reign.

Louis XV was known as the well-beloved, but it is

rather as the well-loving that he will be recognized by those who know his life. No longer young, after the death of La Pompadour, he found that the ladies of the court had ceased to please him. These bowing women with their humble but correct and set attitude could no longer arouse the tired senses of this thorough sensualist.

Moreover there was almost as much severe ceremony with regard to mistresses as there was in connection with his wife. At the age of fifty one begins to seek comfort and to look upon mere gallantry as just so much wasted time. Louis, the old man, was suddenly attacked by a fear that but little time remained allotted to him for pleasures. This and the wasted hours of former years combined to inspire in him a frenzied demand for all the enjoyment he could procure.

Away with etiquette and ceremony! Away with these cultured and polite women! Only harsh reagents would be felt by him now. These finer things could no longer touch him. He had become almost like one of those doddering, pleading idiots who cannot see above or below a woman's lap.

The dying Pompadour had known how to fit herself to accord with the changing character of her royal friend, even when he remained her Lord and not her lover. Her body, ravaged by tuberculosis, could not serve him. He had no more use for her mind. But she did not wish to lose her power and so, though it hurt her, she fitted up that well known Parc des Cerfs, which she populated with maidens who she knew would never be dangerous to her.

Thus she became his master of pleasures rather than his mistress; and the arrangement so pleased the King that even after her death he continued to use his private brothel rather than choose a more permanent beloved.

This condition could not be allowed to continue, for

it threatened to take the power away from the court cliques and put it into the hands of the valet Lebel, who had charge of the stocking of the royal preserves in the Parc des Cerfs. This might mean losing control over the king, though at the worst the valet might be made into a subaltern confederate.

It happened that Richelieu was saying these things aloud at a gathering which as usual was not of the most select, and when he said that what was needed was a real mistress, the adventurer and pander, Count Jean Dubarry of Toulouse, made a suggestion which reaped a greater success than his previous schemes.

Dubarry understood the art of making a talented girl into a real delicacy fit for a king. His first attempt had miscarried because it was too good. He had sent La Pompadour a watercarrier's daughter from Strassburg, a girl by the name of Dorothea, who pleased the king so much that the frightened Madame de Pompadour sent her back to Dubarry and had Lebel tell the King that the girl had a disgusting illness. Louis was horrified and would hear no more of her.

Dubarry now informed the Duke de Richelieu that he had at present a girl who was so beautiful that Dorothea was a scarecrow in comparison. His price for the young woman was the post of envoy at Cologne. He had asked the same in exchange for Dorothea.

When the new candidate was presented to the King at Versailles, Count de Genlis took care not to reveal his astonishment at recognizing a girl whom his servant had brought him several years ago to grace his bed for a night. At that time she was still the fifteen-year-old Anne Bécus, daughter of a certain woman Bécus by an unknown father. Born in 1743, she was twenty-three years old on the day that she entered the halls of Versailles and, for the first

MADAME LA COMTESSE DU BARRY.

time, sniffed the court air with her fine greedy nose. She was no longer Anne Bécus. She was Countess Dubarry. For this purpose Jean Dubarry had called his brother William Dubarry up from the South, and after the ceremony had sent him back home at once.

The populace entered Versailles in the person of Anne or Jeanne or Jeannette as she called herself. This new Jeanne did not set a crown upon the head of a king like the maid from Domrémy, but rather imperilled it with a kick from her dainty pointed foot, so that the next king was the last king and the crown fell from him along with his head.

The siege of the Bastille really began with the entry of Jeanne Bécus. The King had wedded his folk but the marriage was not a rightful union and a bloody separation followed. Count Jean Dubarry had bet on the right horse this time. Out of his stable of exquisite creatures trained for just such careers, he had brought forth a masterpiece. Nature had done her utmost and Dubarry's talent consisted in the art of making nature seem as natural as possible.

Just as nature had formed her she was complete. Her knowledge was nil. She was delicately plump, silver-blonde, her eyes were big and melting, half-hidden by luxurious lashes, her nose was fine and nervous, her mouth soft and sweet, her speech contained a mild childish lisp that suited her even in her old age, her small brain was naïve but sly, and her heart was kind. She was all she appeared to be; and just as she was she was perfect. She had never learned to write. What did she want with orthography or knowledge?

She liked poets only when they were able to write couplets and sing them. She was interested in painting only insofar as it applied to the decoration of her boxes, jars, and porcelains. Scholars and philosophers did not

interest her in the least, and the King was happy again, for during the last years of the talkative Pompadour, he had become sick of these things. His tired, lazy mind was refreshed by the uncultured actions of Dubarry.

When before the whole court she cried out: "You're a liar! You're the biggest liar on earth!" he smiled graciously, amused and pleased. He had not intended to displease her, he had only forgotten to carry out one of her wishes. For he always did what she wanted him to—which was exactly what Jean Dubarry desired.

She received all the money she wished. She demanded that everyone respect her. In this she was simply following the demands of the clique which was interested in her. She never suspected that she was a mere tool. She had three advisers, the humpbacked sister of Chon in cases of etiquette and intrigue, Chon himself and Jean in other matters; and these people saw to it that she exerted her efforts in accordance with the party's wishes.

They made it clear to her that her position as favorite at court would remain insecure until she had caused the party in power to lose its present position and had given the helm to the opposing party. Thus the little Dubarry tumbled the all-powerful Duc de Choiseul, whom she really liked, and for whom she had much more sympathy than for the clerical party that came in.

It was a grotesque situation. The clericals made use of Dubarry to secure the fall of the atheistic and liberal Duke. The situation became even more grotesque when the King was on his death bed and the clericals did all in their power to hinder him from receiving the holy sacraments, while the atheists ran from bishop to bishop to find one who would have enough courage to administer the extreme unction and thus put an end to Dubarry and the clerical party.

The atheists won. The King had them to thank that he died a Christian. They wanted him to dictate a farewell to Dubarry, not however because they were worried about his soul. Similarly the clericals were willing to let the King go unanointed to hell, just so that Dubarry should not fall into disgrace, along with them.

In all these great events Dubarry remains the most important figure, not because of her own capacities, but simply as a tool in the hands of other people. She had no opinions and no personal interest. She did not reign, but through her, and with her as a figure-head, the party reigned.

For she was only a woman to the King, and the King was not a king to her, but a man. Therein lay her power, and her party was quick to see it and make use of it. It was easy to persuade her that certain small favors she received in return for her services were really very important. The minister arriving at the King's levée, or waiting in his ante-chamber, failed to accomplish anything, while the beloved who shared her bed with her lover achieved whatever she wanted.

Now the King is dead and she is in the nunnery to which she has been exiled. Everyone is kind to her and she thinks it is quite charming, though a trifle shut-in and she does not care much for Mama's company. Finally she is allowed to live at the prettiest of all her former castles, Luciennes near Marly, which is full of jolly memories, and in particular full of the most marvelous treasures, furniture and decorations, laces and tapestries and porcelains.

True she has to sell some of these treasures, because her income does not suffice, and her servants by stealing and wasting take advantage of her inability to count. She is forty years old but still as beautiful as at twenty

with her expression more than ever tempered by innate goodness. She has two maids; one is always pregnant and the other suffers from cramps, and so, in order not to disturb them, this delightful woman hides herself and takes a third maid. She is wild when she hears that her servants have intercepted her gifts to the villagers, and it is for this, and not because they have stolen from her, that she has them dismissed.

Though as a young girl she had passed through the hands of hundreds of men, only once had she been in love, and then with a poor devil. Now that she is past forty, true love finally strikes her,—the real thing with all its mad anguish and longing. A man loves her as though she were still a maiden, and for that he is guillotined and she, in attempting to save him, almost ruins herself. She inspires servants to such love and respect that they are led to death for their devotion and with their last breath speak words of thanks for their kind mistress.

To Queen Marie Antoinette, in prison, she writes that she is willing to give every cent she has if that will help. The Queen has never been kind to her, but Dubarry is free from all taint of revengefulness, though she is no royalist. She is only a woman bent upon helping those whom she knew once upon a time and who have now come upon bad days. All she herself did was to fire a couple of rascally servants. And for that she lost her head.

The discharged servants realized the era in which they were living, and so, instead of plundering as thieves, they turned politicians and, as members of the patriotic party and good scholars of Rousseau, they confiscated.

The "Patriots of Luciennes" had to bide their time for the maturing of their plan as the authorities were unable to verify any of the dozens of accusations against the "Royalist Dubarry," nor find any other valid reason for

arresting her. The tireless "Patriots of Luciennes," however, finally saved their country, and saw Jeanette lodged in the Conciergerie, in the very room that had once held Marie Antoinette.

In the tumbril, the poor woman, with her hair cut short, never ceased howling: "My life! My life. Give me only my life and I'll give the nation all my possessions." A patriot shouted back to her: "You would be giving back to the nation only what belongs to it."

A coal carrier turned around towards the patriot and gave him a cuff on the ear. This man of the people saw in the unfortunate lady riding to her death only a woman of the people like himself.

She was fifty years old when the guillotine struck her. All her life she had lived just as her instincts had commanded her, and she could not understand why she had to die.

LA CAMARGO

On the twelfth of May, 1768, three gentlemen stood before an old house in the Rue Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre. No one answered the bell. Duclos repeated again what Grimm and Helvetius had been denying all the way: "I assure you La Camargo has been dead for fifteen years."

Finally a centenarian woman opened the door and to the query as to whether Madame were at home, ushered them into the salon. On all sides hung pictures of La Camargo in all her rôles and all her graceful poses. In one corner was a madonna with dusty wreaths and veils.

A door opened and six great hounds bounded into the room. "She is brave to live with such huge animals," said Grimm. La Camargo entered carrying an Angora cat in her arms. She was dressed in the fashion of twenty years ago.

"Down, Marquis! Be quiet, Duke! Come here, Baron! Pardon my company, gentlemen. This, you see, is my court now. May I ask what. . . ?"

In their embarrassment the three gentlemen looked at each other. Duclos began: "This is a serious occasion."

"And when you hear the cause of our visit, you will pardon our . . ." Grimm continued.

"You make me curious, as though I were twenty again. And I am an old woman."

"The heart never ages," said Helvetius gallantly.

"Ah! only those who have never loved can say that. Love never ages because it dies in childhood. But the heart . . ."

La Camargo

Helvetius protested. "What you say only reveals how young your heart has remained."

"Perhaps, but the heart is a coin withdrawn from circulation when it is accompanied by wrinkles and white hair. But will you explain this mysterious visit?"

The gentlemen lapsed into an embarrassed silence. Then Helvetius thought that, since he had been so gallant, it was he who could best undertake an explanation.

"You see, we were breakfasting and speaking of the delights of our youth, and all of us mentioned La Camargo. There was not one of us who in those days would not have gladly given our lives for an hour with her!"

"Don't!" the old lady interrupted and looked away. "Let me die in peace."

The gentlemen had undertaken this journey in high spirits. They had expected a comedy, the farce of an old woman who had loved a great deal in her youth. And in fact the sight was comic, but none of them could laugh.

"Well, at breakfast," Helvetius continued with difficulty, "there was a gentleman who insisted that he was the one whom you had loved most of all. A quarrel arose and threatened to break out in violence. Then M. Grimm, who was the calmest, suggested that we three come here and ask you whom you loved most of all. Was it Count Melun? Was it the Duke of Richelieu? Was it Marquis Croismare? Baron Viomesnil? Vicomte Lumilhac? Was it a poet? An abbé?"

"Why not the whole peerage? You are crazy! I'll not answer any such question."

"We also quarrelled," Helvetius continued, stroking two dogs at once, "over the time when the short ballet skirts were first introduced."

The old dancer rose and took Helvetius' hand. "Come with me," she said and took him into her bedchamber,

where she slept with her six dogs and her cat. The crowded room was all upset. La Camargo pointed to a small box: "Bring that with you," she said, and they returned to the salon.

La Camargo opened the box and extracted a faded picture, which she handed to the gentleman.

"Is that your boastful friend?" she asked.

"No! No, that is not the man."

"I myself never look at it," said La Camargo. "Pictures are for people who won't take the time to recall. So now, gentlemen, go back and tell your friend not to drink too much hereafter. And if you ever speak of me again, say something nice." She rose. The gentlemen rose.

"Who was it?" Grimm asked as he returned the picture.

"I never told that to anyone except to one man who happened to come upon me as I was crying. He was that old monkey, Fontenelle, who has two brains and no heart. He pestered me for an hour and when I at last gave in and told him the story, he said in his thin, piping voice: 'That's awfully nice.' What good is it to be both poet and philosopher if you are unable to appreciate these matters?"

She paused, and after a moment sat down again, whereupon the gentlemen sat down also.

"Please tell us," Helvetius begged. "We deserve it more than that old egoist."

"I suppose you are anticipating God knows what revelations, but it's really nothing at all. You recall no doubt the scandal of my elopement with Count Melun . . . I was twenty years old then. Count Melun abducted both me and my sister Sophie, who was just thirteen. Sophie insisted upon being abducted, and as she would have revealed everything to Papa if we hadn't, we were forced to take her along, for Papa was very proud of his family,

of his grand-uncle the Cardinal and his other grand-uncle the Great Inquisitor. At first Melun refused saying: 'My dear child, your dolls will cry if you leave them.' But Sophie was always a saucy girl: 'I'm not a child,' she said, 'I'm thirteen and for eight weeks I've been dancing in the Abduction of Psyche.' So we had to take her along to Melun's place in the Rue Saint-Gervais.

"The next day I wrote to the director that the doctor had forbidden me to dance for three weeks. A week later, however, I myself went to the director and reported myself in good health and danced again that same evening. That wasn't flattering to Count Melun, but do you think there are many men who can keep one amused eight consecutive days? I liked him, but of course, the theatre!"

"Is this, then, Melun's picture?" Duclos asked.

"No, no! That is Merteille. Let me tell you about that. Of course Sophie was soon sent home, and Melun and I were living together when a cousin of his came home from the army. He was a regular army lieutenant, a swaggering, dreadful fellow.

"But no sooner were we alone than he began to speak as sweetly and clearly as a scholar. Once we rode out into the Bois in Melun's carriage. Melun was to follow us on horseback. I can still remember every detail. The carriage drove along slowly, and neither of us spoke. I caught the sun on a facet of one of my diamond rings.

"Then he took my hand. Yes, he took my hand. . . . One loves best to recall the beginning. That is always the most beautiful part. . . . At first the driver refused to drive to the place where Merteille wanted to go, for it was Melun's coachman La Violette, you know. But Merteille threatened him with a beating and promised him fifty gold pieces and away we went.

"In half an hour we were in a strange region. I couldn't

recognize the place any more. We crossed the Seine over to Velaisy, where Merteille's brother, who was away on a voyage, had a little castle. And that evening at the opera there was a big to-do about my abduction and everyone made fun of Melun, who had hunted me everywhere and had finally gone to the theatre to meet me. He was furious!

"The opera mourned me for three months. For three months I was lost in Velaisy. . . . La Tour painted that picture of him for me. Three months—and then I had to go back and dance. He went away to the Netherlands to fight, and it was there that he fell.

"Years later I visited the battlefield. The wheat stood high in the fields. Here are a few heads." She took a handful of straw out of the box. "Only three months, but for that I loved him the rest of my life. That's the whole story. Stupid, isn't it? But don't say: 'That's awfully nice,' like Fontenelle."

The three gentlemen bade La Camargo farewell and went their several ways. Helvetius told the story to his wife. Grimm made notes of it for his court journal, and Duclos extracted from it some valuable moral speculations. And two years later when Mariane de Camargo was taken to her grave, he remarked: "It is altogether fitting that she should have a white pall, as is usual for virgins."

MADAME DU DEFFAND

THAT bored people may be exceedingly interesting, yes, that a bored person may even be one of the most important personages of an era is illustrated by the life of Madame du Deffand, whose eighty years almost fill the eighteenth century. The *Ancien Régime* found no greater expression of its social culture.

The thought of this period is preserved in the books of the philosophers. The poetry is to be found nowhere, for it did not exist. The society of the time is revealed in the letters of these four: the Prince de Ligne, the Abbé Galiani, Horace Walpole, and Madame du Deffand, and most strikingly of all in the letters of that bored lady. The letters of other women of this period, though genuine enough, read more like novels; their humor is that of *le bel air,* and, though they evince sensitivity, they are on the whole the sort of thing that brings all talent, soul and thought to the level of dressmaking, or some other art of the social world.

Madame du Deffand could not bear this society whose *ton* we find expressed in the letters of de L'Espinasse, d'Epinay and the Duchess de Choiseul. But as much as she hated it, there was nothing else to be done, for she hated lonesomeness even more. So we find her constantly engaged in conversation, or in letter-writing, which is only a kind of fixed conversation.

In conformity with her age, she married without any personal interest in the matter, but it did not take this exceedingly beautiful woman long to realize her situation.

Her husband disgusted her and she soon left him. For a while she was the mistress of the Regent, and later she had other lovers which whom to fill the hours of tedium. When she grew older she had friends instead of lovers, for certainly the President Hénault, whom she outlived twenty years, cannot be considered more than a respectable friend, even though they lived together. Friends or lovers, no matter, it was just a question of whiling away the boredom of living.

At the age of sixty-eight she became blind, but for all that *la clairvoyante aveugle* saw more clearly than ever. She saw through the world in which we live, and it was her clear vision that afflicted her with her boredom, her impassioned boredom. "Isn't it unbearable never to hear the truth?" she asks. Meanwhile, searching for herself, she found the truth, and a sad truth it was in a world that prided itself upon having shut out the divine, a world that was so limited to the human that it was soon to erect an altar to reason.

Boredom, it seems, is a disease, not of old age, but of the happy, or at least of those who are considered happy. And the peculiar characteristics of this disease are that it changes this happiness into misery and makes a poor unfortunate creature out of the sufferer. From the eminence of her envied position, the Marquise looked down upon a godless world, and realized that it was common, low and stupid; nor did she spare herself, for she talked herself out of every feeling and out of every passion.

"May you never suffer," she writes to a friend, *"la privation du sentiment, avec la douleur de ne s'en pouvoir passer."* (The privation of sentiment, along with the pain of being unable to live without it.) She herself is incapable of feeling, or at least thinks she is, and, though she often longs for it, she is never quite sure that it is worth the

Madame du Deffand

trouble of seeking. She is not really sure that anything is worth the effort. She is totally indifferent, but that by no means eases her condition; on the contrary she is disgusted with herself.

Though she does not care for life, she finds the idea of the end of life more real than sickness. She fears death. Knowing this she seeks to lose herself, to distract herself, but she is always aware of herself and never lost. Her mind is powerful enough to study herself completely, but she has no talent. Her friend Walpole, who brought into her existence a belated romance, which did not however affect her boredom, said that she exhausted herself in the activities of a life of "Herculean weakness."

The Marquise is seventy years old when she meets Horace Walpole who is not yet fifty. At first she seems to him a *débauchée d'esprit,* an old blind woman: a few months later he calls her *charmante.* Finally she becomes his friend, and he calls her to task in a brutal manner for having written him love-letters. He realized that the King had many posted letters read to him at his breakfast, and he did not wish to be made ridiculous by a liaison with an old woman.

Walpole was an amateur and a dilettante. He had an active mind, but its power was not aimed at any goal. He really did not believe in any goal. His boredom is not as tragic as that of Madame du Deffand, for he at least knows how to forget. He believes in nothing, but he takes things as they appear to be and is jolly. He builds, plants, collects, writes, prints, and imitates the Grand Seigneur by despising himself and his writings. He has wit, a piquant imagination, and a knowledge of human character. His worries are all concerned with his gold fish, his etchings, his cats, his pictures, and his dogs. He contradicts himself, is affected, capricious, paradoxical. He would like to

be taken for a determined, resolved man, but he is actually only stubborn. He hides his fear beneath contempt. His cowardice causes him to be more afraid of appearing ridiculous than anything else.

He is so much a part of his time that he stands above it, as is true also of Ligne, Galiani and the Marquise. He thinks as these three do, and follows his reason to the end, as everyone tried to do in that age of reason. Perhaps that is why they later cut off so many heads, believing, no doubt, that the head could live without the body.

These four were passionate people in a world which rated decency above everything else. Their passions had no room to exist in the narrow confines of the *Ancien Régime,* so they lived in their minds and wore themselves out in sterility. None of them succeeded in developing a real talent. They managed, however, to understand their period. Galiani had melancholia, the Prince de Ligne hid himself behind his irony, Walpole developed spleen, and the Marquise was bored.

It is quite sad to read of the way this blind old woman, who carried weighty opinions so lightly and gracefully, fell in love with Walpole, the way the latter coarsely ordered her to stop it, and how she promised him that she would try to suppress it. He calls her crazy, and it seems for a moment as though they must part enemies, but the Marquise bears up patiently beneath all his harshness.

He will not brook even friendship. She answers: "Good, let us be friends without friendship. That's something new, but no more mysterious than the Trinity."

When her secretary prepares to read to the eighty-year-old lady the last letter she has dictated to Walpole, his voice breaks and he cannot go on. The Marquise asks in surprise: "What! you love me?"

In that society of reasoning beings (which was the only

society she knew, because it was the only society that existed), she had become so estranged to herself that she could not believe her own feelings and passions, and she was unable to realize that it was possible for her to arouse passion in others. "Yes, of course," she said to her friend, the Duchess de Choiseul. "You know that you love me, but you do not feel it."

Can love exist in a seventy-year-old person? In a letter the Marquise expresses pity that Walpole is not her son. But motherly love does not become sentimental. For seventy years this woman succeeded in living down her nature. But then the beliefs and passions imprisoned in her heart broke forth, and, against the background of her tragedy like diamonds against black crêpe, her wit sparkled more than ever, with all of it directed at this one man. If he did not love her, at least he did not deceive her like the rest of the world, which lay at her feet as she was dying, and which she spurned with her last contemptuous word: *"Canaille!"*

MADAME DE GEOFFRIN

THE painters and sculptors who, twice a week between the years of 1750 and 1770, frequented the house of Geoffrin in order to enjoy the excellent cuisine, were willing enough, the while they chewed, to listen to Madame's aesthetic suggestions, and take their revenge later by playing pranks upon her husband, the wealthy mirror-manufacturer.

They would, for instance, present him repeatedly with the first volume of a work in many tomes. The old gentleman would read it through bravely each time, and eventually declare that the work was a bit repetitious. Or else they would give him a volume printed in double-columns, and M. Geoffrin would read the lines straight across and come to the conclusion that the author dealt in abstractions that were a trifle beyond him.

Once a guest asked what had become of the old gentleman who always used to sit so silently and whom he had failed to see now for some time. Madame said: "That was my husband. He is dead."

Madame was the daughter of insignificant people. Left an orphan early in life, as she relates in a letter to Catherine of Russia, she was brought up by a clever grandmother. Accordingly, Madame not only became clever but she was also ever after a bit grandmotherly. She dressed tastefully but always a little older than she actually was. In conversation she preferred calm and harmony. She kept those who were too lively in their discussions away from her. She affected the simplicity which she loved. Her mild motto was: "Give and forgive." And in order to please herself she was liberal with gifts. To be

Madame de Geoffrin

thanked made her nervous. After all, she wished to please only herself, not others. She needed many men around her, for she loved to direct. Once she had formed an opinion of a person, she never changed it. For the sake of her peace of mind she adhered to her first conception; besides, she lacked the sympathy to investigate more deeply.

In spite of the fact that nearly all the painters of her time visited her salon, there are strikingly few paintings of her. The portrait which hangs at Montpellier and which was attributed to Chardin was said to represent her. Recently, however, it has been ascertained that the picture is by Aved and portrays Marguerite Crézat.

But for all that it might be taken to represent Madame de Geoffrin, for the canvas shows us a lady dressed decently and quietly in the fashion of a matron who understands how to grow old, a dignified woman, in excellent health, with small, somewhat mean eyes, a tiny mouth, and a long, pointed, and very sensible nose. That was Madame de Geoffrin.

The portrait by that courteous liar, Nattier, is quite authentic. He depicts her as a regal lady of forty, a Hebe, now grown rather stout. When she married at the age of fifteen she may have been pretty. Certainly at twenty-two she was not, to say nothing of forty.

Madame had a rich, amiable huband. It would have been easy to follow the fashion and deceive him. Perhaps the very ease of it made her desist. Besides, her famous salon soon attracted her more than her boudoir, and she was absolutely free from passions. She did not even have moods. She was really thoroughly sensible.

Since she was satisfied with being tempted and did not seek any particular affair, her whole life became bound up in her one great passion: her salon. And it soon became known all over the world. Yes, even in Poland.

Thus it happened that old Poniatowski sent her his son, according to the custom then in vogue of having a young man's education finished by the ladies of the Salons. But young Poniatowski did more than permit himself to be educated. He gambled, for example, and lost heavily. Madame de Geoffrin saved him once from the debtor's prison of Clichy, by paying huge sums to cover his debts.

It was the young lad's fate to be the delight of women. Only Madame Glory refused him, even when, later, due especially to the support of that keen-minded Bacchante, Catherine II, he received the crown of Poland to wear upon his pretty curly head.

At this time Madame de Geoffrin was in her seventies. "Her son," as she called Stanislas August, and as he loved to have her call him, had one characteristic which must have fairly bewitched women of Madame de Geoffrin's temperament: he was at the same time not only the handsomest man of his time, but also the most unspoiled. There was no trace of the rake in him; and the Empress to whom he owed his fatal crown loved him as a vassal and as a boy.

Madame knew that he was hopelessly in love with his patron, and for that reason she controlled her own love within the bounds of platonism. In this case it was not the usual dull affair, for the seventy-year-old woman was really in love, and for the first time in her life.

Voltaire has written these excellent lines:

"He who has not the spirit of his age
Suffers all the torments of his age."

It is easy to make sport of the love of an old woman. But is a real passion ever ridiculous? It seems, on the contrary, that when love resides in an old and broken-down body, it is a sign of life's strong, undying power.

All the more admirable is Madame's behavior. She acted wisely, as ever. Her reason remained superior to her love. She never let her passion stray beyond the limits of her small heart. And she further tried to conceal it behind her grandmotherly veil, which perhaps only served to disclose it the more advantageously.

Madame de Geoffrin had never left Paris. At seventy, however, she closed the doors of her salon and undertook the hazardous pilgrimage to Poland, eleven hundred miles of hardships.

She writes thus to Stanislas: "I shall go towards you as long as the earth will carry me, and when I arrive, I shall die in your arms, overcome with pleasure, joy and love." And another time: "My dearest son, my dearest King, my dearest Stanislas August, you are these three persons in my trinity."

A carriage full of famous people, who are officially received in every town and on every estate, travels very slowly; in fact takes months to go from Paris, across Germany, to Warsaw.

Her social standing had given her no little snobbishness, and that may be the reason why she found nothing amiss in her love for a reigning prince. Or perhaps she was a love-snob and felt that her passion made her superior to all other supposedly passionless people.

She writes: "When I think of the fact that my beloved son, whom I knew when he was so young, whom I used to scold so often, is now a king, and still loves me as formerly, when he was nothing but my son, my head swims and my heart burns."

And the King repays the money she spent to settle his gambling debts by assuring her that "The title you give me of your 'beloved son' is as flattering to me as all other titles I possess."

To be in love with a King who loves an Empress, and is in addition a romantically handsome gentleman, these little vanities must have exceeded even her love. For when Poniatowski was near losing his throne, she advised him to flee to her and find solace in her arms.

This did not entice him. A stronger hand put an end to the King. Madame, however, was already dead.

Evening Party at Madame de Geoffrin's

THREE SKETCHES IN RED CHALK

MARIE ANTOINETTE

When Madame de Geoffrin, that staunch bourgeoise with a royal conceit, stopped at the Viennese court while on her journey to her Polish King, the Empress Maria put her ten-year-old Maria Antonia in the Frenchwoman's arms, and said: "Take her along! Take her along!"

Five years later the little flapper was wedded by proxy to the eighteen-year old Dauphin, and went away with the French envoy to meet her glorious and terrible future.

Thus Maria Theresa had played her last piece in the political game which was intended to secure her power by putting her ten children into important positions in Europe. She overvalued this importance. Nevertheless, she felt pangs of guilt for having sacrificed her children to her interest and she endeavored to justify her actions by urging her daughters to serve their husbands by being good wives, to serve the state by wise conduct, and to serve the people as good examples of virtuous and god-fearing lives.

Maria Theresa must have found it hard to address Madame de Pompadour as "dear cousin." And no doubt it went against her heart to advise her daughter not to snub Madame Dubarry, as the King's sisters were urging the flapper to do, and as the young wife herself would have loved to do purely out of high spirits, and not out of self-righteousness.

Perhaps the Empress considered herself as God's appointed tool, to break the tradition of the keeping of mis-

tresses by the Bourbon kings. Her daughters were given to her by God for this purpose, and so she warns her Marie Antoinette in every letter, to make herself indispensable to her husband by not interrupting the King when he is speaking.

To Marie Antoinette, living carelessly through the pleasant days, the advice of her mother, not to be anything but a good wife and the mother of as many children as possible, appeared hopelessly old-fashioned. The same could be said of her mother's repeated reminders to remember to do some serious reading every day, and her ridiculous objections to sitting astride on horseback, and her foolish reproof for having spent two hundred thousand livres on a bracelet, and her silly fuss over a thirty-six-inch headdress. Marie Antoinette would interrupt her French letters to call her mother ill-humored, *grantig,* in the Viennese dialect.

The Empress would answer seriously: "Your beauty is not actually noticeable. And as for talents or knowledge, you know yourself you haven't any." What she had was charm, sprightliness, wit and kindness. All that was very well, but insufficient for life. She really ought to get down to more serious matters. The trouble was that she was simply too lazy, too curious and too affected. "Believe me, the French people will hold you in greater esteem and consideration, if they find in you German loyalty and honesty. Do not be ashamed of being a German even to the extent of appearing clumsy."

The Empress was afraid that her daughter would be pushed aside by a mistress, and live the usual life of French queens, a quiet martyrdom between cloister and tomb. It was in order to avoid such a fate that she had been brought up to be graceful, sweet and giddy, for this nation, addicted to all that was elegant, demanded

Marie Antoinette

especially giddiness from the women who wished to be French.

The sacrifice of a daughter would have been wasted if the attitude of her husband had changed, for upon his goodwill depended the political value of France's alliance with Austria. The mother's letters to her daughter concerning the duties of a queen are in the nature of a Machiavellian treatise, a kind of super-Machiavellism, whose object was purity. And the child was really a better pupil than the Empress thought.

No one knew better than Marie Antoinette how to set off to advantage youth and naïveté. In peasant costume she raced through halls and across terraces and danced with anyone who happened to be around. She was the despair of the old members of the Royal household brought up in the ancient etiquette.

But the eighteen-year-old girl had grasped the fact that to be mistress, as well as wife and queen, she must break the stifling formalities within the palace, else the King would have to seek pleasure and freedom elsewhere. Louis was not to be made into a weary Sultan who would go to his favorite for an hour's relaxation. Marie Antoinette intended to make virtue as delightful as vice. And we must remember that, as woman and wife. Marie Antoinette was victorious. As Queen, she lost. Lost crown, country, and life.

The whole world went against her. The formal Puritans, whose etiquette she had disturbed, first of all. Even the Royalists became her enemies. As a matter of fact, the royalist Champcenetz wrote the first pamphlet against her. But principally the Dubarrys of the court and the city, the whole tribe of mistresses and their go-betweens, and the crowds of people who made their living out of the system hated her with a passion that was wild and full

of cruelty and perfidy. Only women who have lost their chance to be powerful, because the power is suddenly vested in one who has a right to it and knows how to retain it, can hate thus. So great indeed was their hatred that it continued to impel people long after the cause of their hatred was forgotten and long after, amid the cries of the mad *tricoteuses,* the Queen had lost her head.

THÉRÈSE DE STAINVILLE

WHEN the town-councils of the three cities of the principality of Monaco, Cannes, Monaco, and Roquebrune, deemed it proper to follow their big neighbor in the matter of revolutions, they proved to be as unsuspecting as their prince Honoré III of the house of Grimaldi.

This mild ruler graciously gave his permission to the convocation of an Assemblée Nationale, and when the latter abolished all the privileges of the nobility, he betook himself calmly to Paris as though it were today and not 1790.

French troops marched into the principality, and the three cities, with twelve busy gentlemen constituted as a National Convention, ushered in their republicanism with a Te Deum, forty cannon shots and a fine display of pyrotechnics. And after the silver service in the Grimaldi castle had been nationalized, there was really nothing more that the patriots could think of doing.

Annexation followed, France renamed the country *Fort d'Hercule,* and Honoré III was given permission to call himself citizen. Honoré raised no objections. He listened attentively to the pretty speech by Carnot, wherein the latter declaimed courtesously: *"Votre comité pense qu'en anéantissant ses jouissances honorifiques et féodales, elle lui doit protection et sauvegarde pour tout ce que peut lui appartenir à titre de simple citoyen. La loyauté française, en jetant sur les prestiges des grandeurs l'éclat qui les dissipe, n'écrase point celui qui en était revêtu. On peut encore être honnête homme quoiqu'on ait été prince."*

("Your committee thinks that in spite of having abrogated his honorific and feudal rights, it still owes him the protection and safety of all that may belong to him as a simple private citizen. French loyalty, in dissipating the light of the nobility by casting upon their prestige its now dazzling effulgence, does not thereby crush those who formerly possessed this prestige. One may still be an honest man, for all that one was once a prince.")

Honorius the third, although he was only prince by marriage, was treated as of royal blood. He lived on decently, as a citizen of Monaco, according to the advice of Carnot, and he was noted for his liberality. He gave much money to the coffers of the state, and left the army his horses and carriages.

Nevertheless he did not entirely escape the law against suspected royalists. He spent a year in prison, and being an old man, he did not survive his release more than six months. He died, unable to the last to understand the new world. He, for his part, had always been a kind-hearted person, with only the best disposition toward all, and he could see no reason why he should be treated as he was.

The history of the revolution in this microcosm of Monaco contains the tragedy of an impetuous woman, whose story has been remembered because hers was the last head to fall beneath the guillotine.

The second Honorius had a younger son, Joseph Grimaldi, who married a beautiful Frenchwoman, Thérèse Françoise, the daughter of the Marshal de Stainville. She had emigrated upon the outbreak of the revolution, but, having returned to Paris in order to see her two children, she was arrested.

When she was presented with the written accusation of her conspiracy against the Republic, she refused to read

the act. She knew that she was free from guilt. She divided her money among her fellow-prisoners, embraced her maid and went forth calmly to face the tribunal.

Fouquier demanded the death of the Monaco woman, and obtained on the eighth of Thermidor the verdict which condemned her to the guillotine. She was advised to delay the execution of her sentence by declaring herself pregnant. No sooner had she done so than she repented the lie. Proudly she writes to Fouquier:

"Citizen, I hereby declare that I am not pregnant. I wanted to tell it to you personally, but since I shall not see you any more I am writing it to you. It was not fear of death that made me sully my mouth with a lie. I wished only to gain a day's respite, that I myself might cut off my hair and thus prevent the executioner from doing it. For my hair is all I have to leave to my children, and it at least must be clean."

On the envelope, this proud creature wrote: "Very urgent."

She used a broken piece of glass to cut off her hair. The revolutionary tribunal ordered her decapitation within twenty-four hours. This order is dated the ninth of Thermidor.

Thérèse Françoise was carried to the place of execution in the last tumbril that ever went there. And at the very moment that the knife severed her blond, bobbed head, her judge, Dumas, was arrested. The Reign of Terror was over.

That lie would have saved Thérèse Françoise de Stainville. But she was in a hurry to leave this world.

TALLEYRAND'S mistress, a Mrs. Grand, the wife of a Genevan merchant, was as noted for her stupidity as for her beauty. Josephine forced Talleyrand to purchase Mrs. Grand's freedom and marry her, which he did; but he later took his revenge by constraining Josephine to agree to a separation from Napoleon.

Talleyrand's opinion was that "an intelligent woman sometimes compromised her husband but a stupid woman compromised only herself," and he was very pleased with Mrs. Grand, even as had been her very first husband, Sir Philip Francis, the probable author of the Junius letters.

Once, in company, she said: *"Je suis dinde."* (I am a goose, or else—I am from India. Mrs. Grand was born in India.) Everyone laughed, because they interpreted *dinde* rather than *d'Inde,* and her husband would not explain the joke to her. He was quite satisfied with having a stupid wife. His opinion of women was not changed until he encountered his niece, the Duchess of Courland, whose political genius he was forced to admire. This was no slight thing as Talleyrand himself was Europe's greatest statesman since Richelieu. He learnt from her, for she was often more Talleyrandish than Talleyrand himself.

One of her greatest desires was to see the former bishop of Autun come back to the bosom of the Church. Every day she showed Talleyrand the little phial of oil for the administering of the extreme unction. Once, when she had a slight cold, she herself demanded its use. Her uncle was

DOROTHEA OF COURLAND

surprised, but she explained: "What would you, my dear Uncle? It impresses the servants!"

He remembered the words as he lay upon his death bed, and he ordered that the last sacrament be administered to himself. Thereupon Dorothea left France, a country she hated because it had played her a mean trick through her husband. In bringing her uncle back to the Church, she had evened things out.

At the age of seventeen Dorothea was no longer a child. She had set her mind upon marrying Prince Czartoryski. She scarcely knew him and he was, moreover, twenty-five years older than herself, but he came in direct line from the ancient Jagellons.

Then she met Talleyrand, who had been sent to the court of Saint Petersburg to find a wife for Napoleon, but who was more interested in marrying off his nephew than his Emperor. His nephew's wife, he insisted, was to be young, rich, and beautiful for these were the characteristics in which the uncle was chiefly interested. Accordingly he wooed Dorothea with every art at his disposal, informing her, for example, that Adam Czartoryski was about to marry another. Finally he achieved his aim: Dorothea became Countess of Talleyrand-Périgord.

She said to the groom: "I hope, dear Sir, that you will find happiness in the marriage arranged for us. But I want to tell you that, as far as I am concerned, I followed my mother's wishes in spite of my little liking for you."

The groom said to the bride: "Why, of course. That's only natural. Do you suppose that I would not rather live a bachelor's life than follow my uncle's plans? At my age, you understand."

During the *Ancien Régime,* such a dialogue would have attracted no attention, for it was the usual thing. Even today it does not seem so terribly strange. But in 1809 there

was a curious feeling abroad, due no doubt to a Catholic reaction, that marriage was founded upon love. This caused numberless complications. It will be recalled that the German romantic couples were constantly parting to tie up with others and again divorcing, always in search of love within the marriage bond. In the eighteenth century a man separating from his wife would put her back into the convent from which he had taken her. Now she did not go back to a convent, but into another marriage.

In the *Ancien Régime,* a girl never chose her husband; now she felt that love gave her a right to choose. Thus in the year 1789 a book entitled: *"Lettres à Emilie sur la Mythologie"* (Letters to Emily concerning Mythology) tells the young eighteenth-century girl that love is only sensual desire. While in 1809, in a book called: *"Contes à ma fille"* (Stories Told to my Daughter) the author prepares a girl for life's duties with a terrible mixture of sense and sentimentality. The ensuing hundred years termed that "love." Only towards the end of the nineteenth century was this idol destroyed. Now it is revered nowhere except in the most backward provinces.

To understand the manner in which Talleyrand laid siege to Dorothea's heart we must go back to certain incidents found in memoirs of the period. The Comtesse de Dino tells us only how Talleyrand made use of Graf Batowski, who entertained Dorothea's mother, the widowed last Duchess of Courland, at Castle Loebikau, with highly flattering stories concerning the merits of uncle and nephew Talleyrand.

Baron Vitrolles gives us a little further insight into these matters. He was an émigré who became a neighbor of the Duchess the while he waited for the Restoration. Dorothea was still unborn. The Baron was a frequent visitor at the ducal palace.

It appears that the Duchess owed a great deal to this Batowski. Some important matters respecting the Duke were up for vote at the Polish parliament. The vote went against the Duke. The Duchess fainted at once, and Batowski harangued the assembly until a new and successful vote was taken.

When the duchess "awoke," Vitrolles says: "She found herself, so to speak, in the arms of her Polish friend, and her thanks were as spirited as they were natural."

And the gratitude of the Duchess did not abate. It was not without envy that our Baron saw them strolling in the gardens of Loebikau. He would gladly have changed places with the Pole.

Wifely duties soon recalled the Duchess to Sagan, and she left, recommending her Batowski to the friendship of Vitrolles. One evening Batowski was so overcome with *Weltschmerz*, somewhat like Goethe's Werther, that he cried upon his friend's bosom. "But my dear Graf, what can be the matter?" exclaimed Vitrolles. And the Pole answered: "Having everything I want, I have nothing more to desire, and that is why I am so unhappy."

When the Duke died, the widowed Duchess married a Baron Arnfeld, whereupon Batowski appeared with a paper, containing the Duchess' promise to marry him a year after the death of her husband, or else pay him a compensation of one and a half million francs.

Batowski was willing to be magnanimous. . . . He abdicated in favor of Arnfeld, whereupon the Duchess gave him an indemnification consisting of a yearly pension of three thousand ducats, "as a small return for his big and generous sacrifice."

The following year Batowski married the daughter of a wealthy banker. But that he remained a friend of his former beloved is shown by the help he gave her in marry-

ing off her daughter to Talleyrand's nephew Edmond, who would rather have remained single. He married, really, only because his uncle could not bear to face old age without the company of a young, rich and beautiful girl. Wealth proved to be as important as youth and beauty, for it was Dorothea's money that saved Talleyrand from bankruptcy.

THREE ENGLISH ETCHINGS IN COLOR

LADY HESTER STANHOPE

It is a biological law among the great families of England that every now and then a member of the family degenerates into some form of capricious eccentricity. This biological sport is generally a man, but occasionally a woman. In the Pitt family, for example, it was to the daughter of Chatham, the favorite sister of Pitt, that a girl-child was born from the mother's union with Earl Stanhope, a girl-child destined to amaze the world.

The sight of Hester Stanhope—tall as a grenadier, with her great, haughty Pitt-nose up in the air, her dark blue, penetrating Pitt-eyes,—caused Mehemed Ali to declare that the human species was divided into men, women and Englishwomen. Still, Hester was no virago.

She was four years old in the year 1780, when her mother died, to be succeeded shortly thereafter by a cold-hearted, fashionable lady, who left the child to the care of a governess. Lord Stanhope was a tyrant in his house. Though he kept himself locked up in his mechanical laboratory, where he had constructed the first steamship and the first calculating machine, his tyrannical rule did not relax.

When the French Revolution came, he revealed himself as the Jacobin of the House of Lords, and defended the overthrow of the Bourbons. He ordered the family coat of arms removed from his carriages and harnesses. Away with "that damnable aristocratic nonsense," he shouted. It must have been a merry household. Hester ran away to her grandmother when she was twenty-four, and three

years later, when granny Stanhope died, she went to her uncle Pitt, staying there three more years, in fact, until the latter's death. These were her social butterfly years.

Nonchalance was in fashion, but Hester's individuality and impetuosity broke through and were sufficient to shock even Lord Byron. She fell in love with the handsome Lord Granville and recklessly followed her inclination. Granville was as perfect a lover as could be desired, only he refused ever to marry, and left for Saint Petersburg.

Hester told everyone that he had jilted her. At first she was determined to pursue him, and then she decided in favor of suicide. Finally she declared she was pregnant, and later that she had been delivered of a child.

Pitt's sudden death completely altered her circumstances. Forced now to live within the limits of a small income, she sought to establish herself by a marriage. She circulated a tale that she was about to marry a former lover, a Mr. Hill. Then she switched to Canning, and finally to Sir John Moore. Her future seemed threatened with the misery of the commonplace, when her Pitt-blood reasserted itself and she threw herself into the unusual adventures of her strange life.

The year is 1810, her brother is leaving for his garrison in Gibraltar. She accompanies him. It is a three weeks' journey, that is all, and then she will return. Her first short flight accomplished, she gains courage and launches forth on twenty-nine years of travel that make her the most unusual tourist the world has ever seen.

Accompanied by Miss Fay, her doctor, and a large retinue of servants, she leaves Gibraltar and goes to Malta, then to Athens, finally to Constantinople. Then she is seized with a "deadly desire to see Napoleon with my own eyes." But the Minister Canning prevents her from securing a passport.

LADY HESTER STANHOPE

In 1811 she starts out for Egypt, is shipwrecked, and spends thirty hours on a rock near Rhodes before she is rescued. She has to don men's clothes, and Turkish clothes at that. Thereafter she always wears puffy trousers of purple velvet with yellow embroidery, a cashmere turban, brocaded vest, fur cloak and an ornate scimitar set with jewels.

She enters Cairo like a victorious queen. Mehemed Ali receives her with all honors. It is like a fairy-tale, a bit ridiculous, but carried through with absolute seriousness.

Hester proceeds to Jaffa, to Jerusalem, to Damascus. Miss Fay is forced to adopt trousers, but refuses absolutely to ruin herself by sitting astride. There was not enough Pitt in her. Hester is repeatedly cautioned not to enter Damascus, where Turkish fanaticism is strong and will never permit the presence of an unveiled woman in trousers.

"I shall have to seize the bull by the horns," she decides, and at noon the passionate tourist enters Damascus, where the tall woman, riding a horse astride with the assurance of a monarch, draws crowds of people. Their fantastic Oriental minds are carried away by this powerful, blue-eyed creature. They greet her as Queen.

She declares her desire to visit the ruins of Palmyra, and the Sultan of Damascus at once offers her military escort. She refuses, relying upon the friendship of the Bedouins, who, delighted with her horsemanship, adopt her in their tribe. The inhabitants of Palmyra crown her with flowers among the broken columns of Zenobia's temple. And truly Hester resembles Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, she, who, as Trebellius Pollio tells us, was distinguished by surety in command, steadiness in misfortune, cunning in politics, bravery without bounds, and ambition knowing no limits. Zenobia, however, was a true

Queen, with rights over lands and people. Hester was only a tourist, and yet soon possessed herself of all the rights of a queen.

She thought of herself as an Empress, in fact, and endeavored to enforce her rule. A giaour having been found murdered in the desert, she ordered the miscreants punished. She forced the administration to organize a punitive expedition, which, in its attempts to bring the criminals to the law, burnt fifty-two villages and massacred a hundred inhabitants. The French chambre tendered her their official thanks. She spoke of the Arabs as "her people." She boldly faced her enemy and neighbor, Emir Beschyr, and the latter did not dare arouse her. Perhaps Canning had a helping hand in that affair.

After months of illness, stricken with fever, during which she meditated upon the vanities of the world, she left her residence and at first thought of going into the oblivion of a lonely cloister on Mount Lebanon, when suddenly she requested the Sultan's permission to dig for treasure under a ruined temple at Askalon. Instead of the expected three million pieces of gold, she found an antique statue. To demonstrate her lack of interest in such things, she had her doctor pulverize it.

In 1816 she proceeded further into the Lebanon hills and finally stopped at a wretched village called Duhihun. There she and her scanty following established themselves in a few stone buildings, and there she remained for twenty years, until her death. Upon the rocky ground, looking out upon the Mediterranean, she laid out a garden with flowers and verdure.

Now and then curious Europeans came there and were invited to remain as guests. When they returned they had much to say of her power among the Arabs, of her superstitious nature, acquired evidently from her Arabian

followers, of two holy horses, always saddled and ready to bear her to Jerusalem, to the side of the awakened Messiah, the Mahdi.

She continually exceeded the budget of her kingdom, and met the difference by adding to the treasury from her own pocket. Subsequently she borrowed sums from her usurers. Her English servants pilfered her and deserted her. Finally she was left alone with her childhood doctor and a few native women and children. Her doctor was court-historiographer and wrote down the daily events in the life of his Empress as well as the annals of the Empire.

The Empress herself lay in bed all day long, and rose at night to gaze out into the starry darkness, to cry a bit, to smoke her water-pipe, or to exercise herself with her battle-axe. Sometimes her old temper returned and she thundered at her household, swinging her axe in accompaniment and frightening the servants out of their wits.

Her domestics were only a gang of robbers who let everything get dirty and decay. Three dozen hungry cats completed her personnel.

She had long ceased to have any friends in England. Even her oldest brother, Lord Hardwick, had become estranged. She received only a curt note to inform her that her scandalous debts were to be paid out of her pension. Hester wrote violent letters to Palmerston, to the Queen, to Wellington, but did not succeed in having her pension released. Her staunch heroism finally collapsed. Her empty heart resigned itself to heavy-handed fate. She had to dismiss her last faithful follower, the doctor.

In June, 1839, past the age of sixty, she left her shadowy Empire to go to the kingdom of shades. The servants seized everything that could be carried off. The little stone

building on the red, rocky hillside was left empty in the midst of a dying garden. She lay dead on her ragged bed, and her pointed nose clove the air more sharply than it ever did in life. And her cats lamented and wailed all through the starry night.

MRS. COOK

Before her little house at Gateshead, a poverty-stricken suburb of Newcastle, Mistress Cook stands and looks into the setting sun. Her smooth forehead is shaded by her white hood. She gazes across her tidy garden down the clear street into the red sun. Another day has passed. She has been counting them for a long time. She has added up the days into weeks, months and seasons, since that thirtieth of July when James Cook set out on the "Endeavour" from Oxford and sailed down the Thames.

Not until three years had passed did James Cook return, and then he looked so brown and thin, and his eyes were so full of the strange sights he had seen that Mistress Cook could no longer see herself in them. But he at once resumed his old habits, as though he had been gone only a few days. He reached for his pipe where it hung in the corner and found his easy chair; and he knew just where he had put his astrolabe. He liked the little garden with its beds of hearts-ease, after the palms.

He spoke in curt phrases: "Remember, Elizabeth, my first Lieutenant Hicks? Well, he died."

Elizabeth could think of only one thing. "Three years," she repeated. "Three years! What a long time!"

During the Christmas season, old Jack Cook came over, and in the evenings by the light of the lamp, his son related his experiences. He told of lands and islands, strange names and queer animals, and savage women. He told of what he had eaten, bread-fruit and bananas and New Zealand peppers, "better than this whisky here." Old Jack

Cook grew merry. James Cook lapsed into dreams, and in Elizabeth there grew a fear that made her tremble.

And one day she saw him look dignified and solemn, and she began to cry even before he excused himself: "It is the King's command. Besides, one wastes away, doing nothing."

It was a warm day in May, when he bestrode the deck of the "Resolution" and gave the command to weigh anchor. A cannon was fired in honor of the explorer; Sir Hugh Palliser held Mrs. Cook's arm very tightly, so that she could not fall.

Again she sits at the window of her little cottage at Gateshead and knits away at something, she scarcely knows what, and counts the days and weeks and months. She nods over her work. The room is full of strange animals and wild flowers and savage women who dive into the sea and swim out to meet the ships.

It is a long time since that day when he first said: "Elizabeth!" to her—and soon thereafter went away to war. And later, on an expedition to unknown country. And still later, on another expedition. And now again . . . She hears the gate creak out in the garden. It is he! But she cannot move, she must hold on to the arms of her chair.

She hears his steps coming down the gravel-walk and a moment later he enters, followed by many people bearing parrots and monkeys. His face is darker than before and his eyes more estranged than ever. She falls upon his breast, saying: "I have waited so long . . ." and she can smell the tang of the sea on his clothes.

The King sends the Captain the cross. In the evening old Jack Cook comes over from Redcar and James' sisters come too, with all the children. And Cook proudly tells

of his adventures, and answers the questions of all, young and old.

In the New Hebrides the people eat their honey along with the bees. . . . In the Friendly Isles . . . On the Island of Juan Fernandez were found goats branded by Robinson Crusoe. . . . There are palm trees that give milk like cows, only better. . . .

James Cook glows as he recounts his marvelous experiences. Mrs. Cook thinks of her homely house and the scraggly garden.

The days pass. James no longer speaks so much. On Sundays he takes his children to Church. Now and then he visits friends in London. But mostly he sits beneath the cherry tree with Elizabeth. No one has noticed how much this happily laughing woman has cried.

One day she shows him some pink blossoms in the largest bed she has set out in the garden.

"I have planted tobacco for you," she says.

"Hereabouts it's worthless. But down South . . ." She can see his eyes light up, the while her heart almost stops.

Three months later the ships "Resolution" and "Découverte" leave for the South Seas under the command of Captain Cook and Clerke Spitehead.

Mrs. Cook sits once more in her armchair by the window. It is spring again and the South wind is blowing. "On just such a day," she muses. "He once came back. . . ."

Out in the garden, the Irish maid says: "The cherries will soon be ripe and Master Cook will be here to taste them."

Elizabeth is tired, her hands now often lie quietly in her lap, still holding the knitting needles, but rarely working. Suddenly the maid runs towards the garden gate.

"In this way he came back to me, three years ago," Mistress Cook says to herself, and she would like to rise to go to meet him, but she cannot move, something holds her back.

Lieutenant King enters the room, holding his tricornered hat against his breast. Even before he utters a word, she knows what has happened. And yet she asks: "Where is he?"

"It was in the Pacific Ocean on the shore of Owhyhée . . . " The Lieutenant says, and cannot continue.

LADY HAMILTON

WEDEKIND's statement, that, as far as women are concerned, beauty, health, intelligence and voluptuousness are inseparable ideas, is not disproved by an occasional exception.

Lady Hamilton's beauty was painted by Gainsborough and Romney. Goethe described it in prose. Wherever she went upon her triumphal tour of the continent, she left passionate witnesses of its effect.

She was voluptuous, too, we cannot doubt that, but it remained hidden. It did not color her life as it should have. And as for intelligence, except for a certain slyness she showed little.

The life of Lady Hamilton reads like a novel of which she is not the heroine. She resembled a jewel in that she did not sparkle unless light fell upon her. She came out of the darkness, shone for a time, while the sun of good fortune illuminated her, and then disappeared again into the bleak night.

Her life was regulated by a series of lucky circumstances and to these she brought only the meagerest cleverness, and absolutely no genius or talent, such as even the greatest beauty demands to be effective. She succeeded, it is true, in making out of a shy hero a lovesick swain, but she could no more learn to let the beauty of her body guide her actions, than she could learn to spell.

Beauty has only one commandment: "Thou shalt not worship any other gods but me." Lady Hamilton led an adventurous life, but she never realized that the first rule

of all adventurers is to feel that the world is made for them. She acted as if her beauty were nothing marvelous, and meant little to herself. She might have multiplied it a hundredfold had she raised it above the commonplace, but she was satisfied with imitating the plastic poses of famous statues and pictures. She succeeded in being a trite Cleopatra, and a fairly good Agrippina, but she never managed to be Lady Hamilton.

Outside of her beauty, she had nothing. No, not even lovers, for none of them was ever jealous. None of them ever became a poet, and that may be because she was exactly as everyone saw her, extremely beautiful. No one could see more in her than did anyone else, and jealousy only arises from the fact that one lover does not want the picture he has fabricated of his beloved to be possessed by another.

"You aren't proud of me," she complains to her lover, who is no longer her lover precisely because he has ceased to be proud of her. Lady Hamilton was so beautiful that nothing was left for dreams. All her simultaneous love-affairs were legitimate.

The seventeen-year-old Emma Harte, who came from Preston to London to be nursery-maid, was soon with child, gotten from a man who was not even her lover. Followed a succession of men, small landowners wasting their heritage and lustily drinking sea-captains, until she met Sir Greville, who was of better origin.

Sir Greville was a collector of coins and curiosities of all kinds, and he cared for Emma more as a collector than as a lover. He had her study dancing and singing, and paid for the upkeep of her children as long as they lived. He would have liked to keep Emma too, only she was too much of a spendthrift, and his means had diminished considerably. It was time he thought of making a rich mar-

Lady Hamilton

riage, and for that purpose Emma was more in the way than not.

He therefore turned her over to another collector, who could well afford the luxury of such a possession. Moreover this collector was his widowed uncle whose estate Sir Greville would inherit, and it seemed best to provide such a man with a mistress rather than have him marry.

This wealthier collector was Captain Hamilton, English envoy to the Neapolitan court, where he was, in spite of his fifty-five years, the best dancer, and what is more, the lover of Queen Caroline, whose anti-French politics he supported with all the plotting and joking that characterized the diplomacy of the day. He was in addition well-beloved by King Ferdinand, whose gluttony he could match, and whom he accompanied on joyful hunting expeditions, for owls, boys and other game. Moreover he was a man of intelligence and taste, and as such admired by Casanova. To cap it all, his heart was big enough for a queen and with room left for a wife—he married Emma. William Beckford, who lived for a time at the Neapolitan court, calls him a hell of corruption.

Queen Caroline despite her wildness had more sense than her Parisian sister Antoinette, who lost her head over a necklace. Caroline took firm charge of the revolution. History tells us how the nobility and citizenry of Naples conducted the revolution, how the lazy beggars, faithful to their king, allowed themselves to be slaughtered by the French, and how the Parthenopeian Republic came to an end. The name of Lady Hamilton is encountered in all these stories.

It is to her beauty that Caraccioli and other Republican men and women owed their martyrdom for freedom, and to her beauty again that the fleeing court owed thanks that they could return to the throne of Naples out of the

shadow of the guillotine. In these affairs, Lady Hamilton had the aid of a hero, a man who surrendered all his genius to minister to her.

After the battle of the Nile, Nelson ran into the Neapolitan port and was welcomed by the entire city. Lady Hamilton, arriving with Queen Caroline, visited the flagship, where she saw the one-eyed, one-armed hero and at once fainted away on his chest, breathing: "Is it possible!"

It was currently said that Nelson went to sea because he was too weak to get along on land. Even the water had its drawbacks, for he was always seasick, and every cannonshot gave him an attack of nerves. It was partly by will-power that he maintained himself.

Early in life he had married a modest, kind-hearted lady, and had lived happily with her in a quiet country vicarage. And then adventure came his way; and in the heat of battle he had lost himself, forgot fame and duty, wife and reputation, and lingered in the Sicilian waters at the service of Queen Caroline, because Lady Hamilton desired him to.

At the behest of the ladies, the betrayed Republicans, both men and women, were hanged on gallows and mainyard. The curious ladies were rowed around the ship so that they might see Prince Caraccioli hanging from the bow, and get a good view of the whole ship, decorated with dead rebels.

Nelson is a more interesting and more mysterious character than Lady Hamilton. Beckford says of him that "he was her dupe, she could make him believe anything—even that the profligate Queen was a Madonna." Of her, he says: "She affected sensibility, but felt none—was artful, a devil in temper when set on edge."

"Sensibility" was the fashionable feeling of the day.

Rather it was the fashionable word which included more than mere feeling, and Beckford states distinctly that her sensibility was affected. This recalls her living statues. She was never able to find her individual character, which lay somewhere between cool English decency and wild lust. Stories are told of how she took poisoned fruit as refreshment to the prisoners. These stories may be inventions, but it is not without reason that they were invented concerning her.

For the sake of Nelson, Lady Hamilton has been judged more kindly than she deserves. Attempts have been made to find more in her than just flesh; to find perhaps that strong soul which brought a hero to her feet. But it must be recalled that Nelson himself, except for a few naval battles, reveals only weakness and shyness. Perhaps he was looking for recreation from the wild excitement of his victories, by losing himself in still wilder sensual experiences.

There are extant letters of his, to Lady Hamilton, in which he simply raves. If anywhere at all, we might expect her to show the greatness of her soul in this affair with Nelson. What we find however is no more than the ordinary cunning of a woman bent upon securing her future.

Captain Hamilton lay on his death bed while she urged Nelson to obtain a pension for her. She produced a child and talked him into believing it the child of his love. He accepted it and was happy. It was plain that she did not care what means she employed. Being so small herself, she tried to attach herself to the fate of other people, instead of attaching people to her fate.

And she deserved her misfortune. Hamilton died, and shortly thereafter Nelson expired at Aboukir. Meanwhile

Emma Hamilton had become fat and had lost her shape, and was, moreover, addicted to drink and silly company. She borrowed money, could not repay, was soon deep in debt and was finally imprisoned.

In vain she reminds Caroline of her services to Naples, and, equally in vain, King George of her services to England. In all her letters and statements she speaks only of her diplomatic tricks, and with no show whatever of pride or dignity, she retells her lies, her cunning, her mean and small artifices. She never reminds Caroline of their Milesian nights, nor England of the fact that she was Nelson's beloved.

Nothing remained of her love affairs. Her cool, impassive beauty had vanished like a dream. So little impression had it made that none of her lovers could recall it. Thus she died, in Calais, fleeing from her creditors. A pensioned Irish Second Lieutenant read the sermon over her grave. For she had become a Catholic in the meantime. No better cloth being at hand, a black petticoat of the deceased was used as a pall.

This is a moral tale, and not an adventure story. To point the moral we have sacrificed much of her very stormy life. Many stronger personalities were permanently derailed by the Revolution. The guillotine was not always merciful when it spared some hero, who subsequently lived down his fame and honor; while others of smaller stature, cut down before their time, have acquired prominent niches in history.

This historical aspect excuses only a small part of Lady Hamilton's sins. There is only one form of feminine intelligence—bodily beauty; and no one ever put a natural endowment to such poor uses as she did. She did not know what to do with it. The best thing she could think of was to

pose as Cleopatra or Agrippina. She could not hope to rule life with such small arts, and so life ruled her and carried her up or down according to the good or bad fortune of the moment.

THREE PORTRAITS IN LITHOGRAPH

Once, impelled by a puerile curiosity, she had sought him out, and now that Balzac was in love with her, she had nothing but scorn for his awkward manners and a cold hearty laughter for the ridiculous aspects of the situation. So cruel and coarse was she that she was not above having a little joke at his expense. One day she invited him to dinner, and at the same time sent him an anonymous billet-doux inviting him to a rendez-vous. Balzac excused himself as soon after the dinner as he could, and hastened to be on time for his appointment. There he met his beloved's old English Miss who, with giggles and tears, explained that her mistress had forced her to take part in this practical joke.

The first letter from this noble-born but ignoble lady came unsigned, from the Ukraine, during the period of Balzac's interest in Swedenborg, when he had just finished *"Seraphita"* and was planning a book which was to be a new *"Christ in Flanders."* It was just such another letter as he frequently received from women who were contemplating adultery, and who had been charmed by the art with which he described such women in his books.

Balzac was flattered but indifferent. He even gave the second letter from his unknown admirer to his beloved to answer in his stead. The correspondent then revealed herself as Countess Eveline von Hanska. With naïve pride, Balzac was at once aroused from the despondency into which an insult from Madame de Castries had thrown him.

And when Countess von Hanska sent him a beautifully bound copy of his *"Christ in Flanders"* he was immediately persuaded that fate had knocked at his door. He was thirty-three years old when this imaginary love took hold of him. It made him both happy and unhappy for the remaining eighteen years of his life.

Up to this first meeting in September, 1833, at Neufchâtel, the two corresponded about literary matters. Balzac exaggerated and lied without restraint. Spoke of his horses —he had frequently nothing to eat. Of the eyes that women made at him—he lived like a monk. Of the moral, pious ideas he was incorporating into his novels—he was then engaged upon the *"Contes Drolatiques."*

Balzac burnt all but the first two of her letters, an auto da fé that no one has ever regretted. She had been told that Monsieur de Balzac was a famous man. This she did not believe but she wrote anyhow, to pass away the dull hours at her lonely castle where she lived in the company of a husband who was twenty-five years older than she. Moreover she had come to think that she meant a great deal in the life of this famous Parisian. Balzac himself was never tired of telling her so.

At their first meeting, Balzac saw a stout woman with big black eyes, a very round mouth, and an otherwise undistinguished face. But she wore a dress of purple velvet that inspired him. There is a miniature by Daffinger of Vienna which represents her thus.

At the sight of the fat, red, violent, and rather sloppy man, it is likely that her first impulse was to bolt. But her husband was there, and Balzac's love had the power to master her. This first visit evidently went further than mere sight, for Madame wanted to go to Geneva to confess and was discouraged only by Balzac's arguments. The author's letters, thereafter, were more lively and more sen-

Madame von Hanska

suous, though he was still convinced that he had ignited a pure flame in a virginal heart, the while she considered herself his Muse.

Perhaps after all it is too bad that her letters were burnt. They might have served as the documentation for the type of little goose that she was. Not that the type is worth exhaustive study, but these letters would have revealed just how much he fed his love with his own imagination.

She wrote that she was jealous. He answered that he worked seventeen hours a day and that his disposition of the day left her no grounds for jealousy. She was just the kind of person who would be jealous of Balzac's touching dedication of *"Eugénie Grandet"* to Maria, who had said to him: "Love me for a year, and I shall love you all my life long."

In the year 1833 Balzac wrote *"Père Goriot," "Lys dans la Vallée," "Jeunes Mariés," "César Birotteau,"* and a host of studies, articles and essays. But the lady enquired: "What do you do with yourself?" He wrote her the details of his work, his poverty, his struggles, his debts and his plans, in short, a compendium of man's energies, and he only bored Madame von Hanska. Often he had to insist: "Rich people can't understand. . . ."

He wrote every week, stealing the time that meant money to him. And, whenever he failed to send a letter, she took him to task very severely, for she was by no means a delicate creature. He had to answer: "I have not eaten for two days, and did not have the money to pay the mailing charges."

Once he wrote her bitterly, quoting what he had said at a gathering one evening: "All women, high-born and low-born, duchesses as well as street-walkers, insist that their man be occupied only with them. They will not permit

him to have ten days of his own to labor upon great affairs, without revolting. It is for that reason that all women love blockheads. The latter give up all their time, and thus prove their devotion. If a genius gives a woman his heart and his fortune, but not his time, the most magnanimous woman will think herself neglected."

The two met infrequently. In 1833 for six weeks at Geneva. In 1835, in Vienna. In 1841 her husband died suddenly, and at once Balzac proposed marriage, a thing which they had both contemplated, but which she now refused. For nine years she resisted his pleas. Perhaps she mourned the loss of her husband, whose decease had made this man who had scarcely been her lover so uncomfortable a wooer.

But Balzac clung to his imaginary love, and even in the beginning had always thought that marriage would some day cement their attachment. For five years he could not work, and did little but retouch and republish old manuscripts. Then he could no longer stand the incomplete picture in his mind, and in a fever journeyed to Russia. . . .

In Berditscheff he married her. Balzac had made new debts in order to refurnish his little house, but when the pair came to Paris, they could not enter the brilliantly illuminated dwelling. The janitor had suddenly gone mad and would not let them in.

Four months later, Balzac was dead. Hugo and Gautier found only his mother beside the dying man. His wife lay in bed with a lover in the next room. A few weeks later she sold his manuscripts to the grocers of the neighborhood to wrap up their wares.

No woman was ever imagined like Madame von Hanska. No imagined person ever gained so much power over his or her author. Balzac had absolutely no influence

on the life of this stupid woman. And as for her, all she was to him was a picture, and an occasional lark such as he might have had with a casual acquaintance or a prostitute.

GEORGE SAND

THE only thing a beautiful woman ought to write is a love-letter, and then she should stop with the date and the address. For no one cares for lies except when he can see the pretty mouth that utters them. Lies that are read from written paper have lost the charm of tempting lips and appear as drab as a rainy day.

The lies of women were never so monumentally recorded as in the numberless novels of George Sand, who thereby immortalized herself. By lies I do not wish to imply here those joyful prevarications that are at the bottom of all art. I am speaking of those lies which seek to hide, or misrepresent, and which are intended to deceive both the world and the subject.

Women understand the curious art of lying to themselves. Out of the many secret possibilities of their being they concoct a saving picture which they convince themselves is their true image. Thereafter they never cease to bend all their efforts to make the world see and admire that image in them. George Sand had a picture of herself, and she lied through many volumes in order to reassure both herself and the world.

It is said of women that they resemble chameleons in their ability to change their color to suit the lover of the moment. Sand may be said to be Rousseau's child, or rather foundling, in view of the fact that she adopted the bourgeois virtues and moral liberties as Rousseau had presented them. She took the bare outline of his theory of

innate virtue and evil and breathed the life of fiction into it.

She was always a writer. She kept pen and ink close to her bed, too close, so a lover once complained. She wrote flowingly: a thing that always delights the bourgeois, and which is the characteristic that accounts for the fame of her works at the time they were published. It accounts, too, for the fact that they are now forgotten.

She described herself well when she wrote in a private letter: *"Embarquée sur la mer orageuse de la littérature."* (Embarked upon the stormy seas of literature.) She always found the happy word with which to express her equally happy thought, and the two together were as effective and as popular as a "chromo"—and worth as much also. That is the best we can say in praise of her facile style and her facile thinking.

Under the inspiration of her genius, she wrote of the "Angel of Destiny," of the approaching "kingdom of truth, visible upon the horizon," and she declared that "the true Christian does not believe in hell." The "true" Christian! But why continue?

Her books are like so many graves, wherein she has interred her lovers. It is simply too bad that George Sand could not weave, out of her style, more tastefully designed wreaths for them. She shared her bed with many famous men, and that gave her both fame and immortality. And the books which she wrote upon her bedside-table shared that reputation as well.

The first literary man who was beloved by the Baroness Aurore Dudevant left her with a predilection for artists and with the name Sand, which she cut off from his name Sandeau. The love she bore for this man, who was cruelly called *"la femme littéraire de Monsieur Georges Sand"* (the literary wife of Mr. George Sand), was just a little

side-chapel in the enormous cathedral of her love. The famous example she gave of the *amour romantique* was the great mass in her cathedral. This was love for love's sake even as once Saint Augustine had professed.

It must be remembered that this period did not find itself expressed in Stendhal, who gave back to love that foundation of virtue and strength of which the eighteenth century *"sensiblerie"* had robbed it, so much as it found itself in Chateaubriand,—for instance in René's letter to Céluta, where he says: *"Je vous ai tenu sur ma poitrine au milieu du désert. . . . J'aurai voulu vous poignarder pour fixer le bonheur dans votre sein, et pour me punir de vous avoir donné ce bonheur."* (I held you at my breast, in the middle of the desert . . . I should have liked to stab you in order to affix happiness within your bosom, and in order to punish myself for having given you this happiness.)

In order to prevent passion from escaping, it is felt that passion must be destroyed. With his breath the lover wants to set the world in flames, in order to light the torch of Hymen. It was a generation that had passed its childhood during the great upheavals and wars that had followed the Revolution and Napoleon. Fortunately for the sake of the civil peace they were suffering now from the inevitable hangover which follows a period of debauchery. They searched for the most exalted expressions they could find to stun themselves and flabbergast the bourgeois.

Musset set the following program: *"L'exercice de nos facultés, voilà le plaisir; leur exaltation, voilà le bonheur."* (The exercise of our faculties, that is pleasure; their exaltation, that is happiness.) The smallest flirtation was transformed into the grandest passion, which the parties

GEORGE SAND

enjoyed as though it were a play. *"J'aime et je veux pâlir, j'aime et je veux souffrir."* (I love and wish to grow wan, I love and wish to suffer.)

Love was more admired than the beloved, and so it happened that these passions always outlasted their physiologic life and continued to live in the imagination. The two unfortunate subjects, now no longer lovers, though still believing themselves such, exert themselves painfully to make their imaginations real, to make their lives live up to their words. But love, mistreated by an exalted spirit, takes its revenge, and destroys the grand passion amidst a welter of quarrels, literature and wounded pride.

When Sand and Musset found it necessary to change the *décor* after the first six months of their love, it was proof their love had already expired, although they secretly assured themselves that it would revive, in fact that their great passion would never have its appropriate background until they reached Venice. But *Venise la morte* witnesses only the agony of love, though the lagoons helped the poet to rekindle his love even more violently—but only on paper.

"Qu'elle découverte avons-nous faite mutuellement, qui puisse nous dégôuter l'un de l'autre?" (What discovery can we have made, to be disgusted with each other?) Sand asks the fleeing Alfred de Musset after their first break, and, among other things, he replies: *"Tu t'étais trompée: tu t'es crue ma maîtresse, tu n'étais que ma mère! c'est un inceste que nous commettions."* (You were mistaken to think yourself my mistress, you were only my mother! We have committed an incest.) "I can kiss the filthiest drunken prostitute, but I cannot kiss my mother." And Sand answers: *"Tu as raison, notre embrassement était*

un inceste, mais nous ne le savions pas." (You are right, our embraces were incestuous, but we did not know it.) How was this mistake possible?

It is necessary to recall that Sand had German blood in her, derived from her great-grandfather, the Marshal Moritz von Sachsen, while her great-grandmother was a Marie Verrières, who like her sister Geneviève was, as the police reports tell us, a gallant lady held in much esteem between 1760 and 1770. Marie Verrières was for a very short time the Marshal's beloved, and this union gave their great-grandchild a heavy and a light blood that would not mix even in the fourth generation.

The numbers of her lovers is no proof of Sand's sensuousness. She was affectedly sentimental, which is characteristic of many frigid women, who know nothing of their bodies. Sensuous women know the value of what they give. Then, too, Sand had those dark eyes and full round lips, which are so frequently deceptive. On their very first meeting, she said to Merimée: "*Viens, Prosper, tu verras que mon âme n'est pas corrompue.*" (Come, Prosper, you shall see that my soul is not corrupted.) When she revealed herself, she deceived her lover's expectations, for her final secret was a clean and chaste soul.

After their separation she wrote to Musset: "*Tu m'as reproché un jour de fièvre et de délire, de n'avoir jamais su te donner les plaisirs de l'amour. J'en ai pleuré alors, et maintenant je suis bien aise qu'il ait quelque chose de vrai dans ce reproche. Je suis bien aise que ces plaisirs aient été plus austères, plus voilés que ceux que tu retrouvera ailleurs.*" (One feverish, delirious day, you reproached me for never having known how to give you the pleasures of love. I cried then, now I am very pleased to think that there is some truth in your reproach. I am more pleased to think that our pleasures were more austere,

more veiled, than those that you will find elsewhere.)

Her sensuousness was of an indolent nature, the kind that keeps her eyes closed. It was this vexatious taste that caused her to seek out men whose rapid exhaustion required a stronger excitation than she could give. Then in the pauses she wrote her novels, the while her lovers complained and suffered. For them she was unable to find the correct words.

Her erotic vocabulary resembled that of a careful, anxious mother. She called her lovers, "my sweet child," or similar appellations. Chopin, she once called, "my dear cadaver." Sensuousness did not lift her up to heights of exaltation. Perhaps she wished to be a Verrières, but she talked like the good German Marshal.

There are women who, in the moments of their falsest, that is, their truest feelings, act as if they were sexually disposed only to please their lover, living, at all other times, a "higher" life. An attempt has been made to paint Sand with the colors of that false naïve chastity, which is equal to cerebral debauchery. Likewise an effort has been made by our moderns, the wild women and delicate men who are the ideal of today's emancipated feminists, to rescue Sand by picturing her as a helpless and much deceived victim of masculine depravity. Fortunately for Sand, a rescuer from such an interpretation appears in the person of one Pagello, the Venetian doctor of Musset.

One night when Alfred lay shivering with the fever, Sand filled three sheets with a declaration of love to the doctor Pagello. She put the still moist manuscript into his hand. As he did not seem to know what to do with it, she added the following address to her confession: "To the stupid Pagello."

There are some marvelous things in this writ which the doctor so carefully preserved his whole life long. She

says, for instance: "I love you, though I do not know as yet if I can respect you, but I love you because you please me." She assures the healthy, blond, broadshouldered doctor that the fact that he is a stranger to her is really very fortunate; he will not be able to speak to her and thus cozen her with words, and she will fill in his silence with the words she would like to hear him say.

"I understand how to love and how to suffer," she continues. "And you, how do you love?" *"L'ardeur de tes regards, l'étreinte violente de tes bras, l'audace de tes désirs me tentent et me font peur. Je ne sais ni combattre ta passion, ni la partager."* (She insinuates that he is already passionate in order to secure him more quickly.) *"Je te regarde avec étonnement, avec désir, avec inquiétude."* (The ardor of your glances, and the violent embrace of your arms, the boldness of your desire, both tempt and frighten me. I know neither how to combat your passion nor how to share it. I look at you with astonishment, with desire, with anxiety.) And remembering Musset, she asks him boldly: *"Les plaisirs de l'amour te laissent-ils haletant ou abruti, ou te jettent-ils dans une extase divine?"* (Do the pleasures of love leave you panting and stupefied, or do they throw you into heavenly ecstasies?)

Thereupon she launches out into ethereal discussions of literature and false conventional shame. Pagello was slow to understand. Sand had to repeat: "Stupid Pagello," several times, before it began to dawn upon the naïve fellow, for whom four Italian girls were also quarreling that she wanted him to want her.

Thus chance made Pagello famous. The other Pagelli are unknown to history, because they never complicated anything. In order not to wound the poet's pride, Sand used to call Pagello a sentimental Don Juan. Both Sand

and Musset publicly gave the Doctor as the cause of the end of their love. This love was on its way, anyhow, to a trivial conclusion, and that would have suited neither the importance nor the romantic disposition of these two ink-spatterers.

In the correspondence between Sand and Musset there was absolutely nothing said about the poor Doctor Pagello. He was a mutual friend, and that was all. Here they were concerned with more important phases of their love. Musset cultivated the idea of deceit, because it pained him, and he was like a masochist, sentimentally fond of pain. *"Les larmes coulent abondamment sur mes mains tandis que je t'écris, mais ce sont les plus douces, les plus chères . . ."* (Tears flow abundantly on my hands, even as I write to you, but they are the sweetest and dearest . . .) or else: "You write that you are alone, and thinking of me. What am I to make of that?" *"Dis-moi plutôt, mon enfant, que tu t'es donnée à l'homme que tu aimes, parle-moi de vos joies. . . ."* (Rather, my child, tell me that you have given yourself to the man you love, speak to me of your joys. . . .) Pain was Musset's most poetic feeling, even before he met Sand. Remember the verse in "Rolla":

"S'il est vrai qu'ici-bas on se trompe sans cesse
Et que, lui qui le sait, de peur de se guérir,
Doive éternellement ne prendre à sa maîtresse
Que les illusions qu'il lui faut pour souffrir . . ."

(If it be true that here below we are constantly deceived,
And that he who knows it, fearing to be cured,
Must take until eternity no more from his beloved,
Than such illusions as suffice to keep him suffering . . .)

His love, even as his art, required tears and despair, in order not to wear out. And this absolute necessity of

his art was all the greater when it was near exhaustion. It caused him to go constantly seeking new pain from Sand. We must therefore not blame her for his early death, for the demon was in him and not in her. This in spite of the fact that she did her best to appear in the half-light of a demoniacal woman, mixing truth and lies, speaking truths only when they were sure to be held for lies, and lies only when they would surely be taken for truths. She preferred words that had double-meanings and loved to speak in riddles. Her very sympathy burnt like poison.

She had bitten into her beloved's flesh, and even sucked the blood out of him, but in her mouth it turned to ink. Thus she was never able to say what the blood tasted like, for she at once made literature out of her love.

"Si je ne crois plus aux larmes, c'est que je t'ai vu pleurer," (If I no longer believe in tears, it is because I have seen you cry) she hissed to the tubercular Chopin, who for all his genius was only a poor pianist, who for ten long years had to suffer and defend himself against her love, till at last she had written him out.

Old women are wont to derive a certain sweetly sad pleasure from the recollection of a youth filled with turbulent love-affairs. Not so Sand. This book that she had written was there, true enough, but her experiences struck her rather as mistakes, and their memory gave her no thrills.

She even adopted the idea of social hermaphrodism, that modern dogma so inimical to our culture. For it is not in the equalization of the sexes and the levelling of all differences, but on the contrary in greater and greater spiritual differentiation and individual development that mankind will find its salvation.

She writes: *"Il n'y a qu'un sexe. Un homme et une femme, c'est si bien la même chose, que l'on ne comprend*

guère les tas de distinctions et de raisonnements subtils dont se sont nourris les sociétés sur ce chapitre-là." (There is only one sex. A man and a woman are one and the same thing, so much so that one finds it difficult to understand how society has fed itself for so long on a host of imaginary distinctions and subtly conceived differences.)

We can understand now why her love-affairs were always characterized by such bad behavior on her part. Her mind was never colored by her love. She was a woman who had once heard the word love and it meant nothing to her, and so she had tried to discover its sense. In her efforts to feel the correct emotions she had simulated them. Her big black eyes and the heavy movements of her body were a bluff.

In her old age this woman discovered at last the true field of her love, in motherly, solicitous friendship.

THERESA LACHMANN

THE bitter and exaggerated statement that the ranks of respectable women contain few who are not tired of their profession, is, aside from the paradox, largely true and deserves consideration. Let us not, however, try to inquire into the reasons. Each woman has her own story,—and what dull and commonplace stories they are for the most part.

What do these tired respectitutes do to ease their boredom? They take a lover, or perhaps two or three lovers. Yes, that is the usual method pursued. The woman, bored with her husband, tries another man, and discovers generally, and very soon, that she is now only twice as tired as before. Otherwise things have not changed in the least.

I have met women of this kind who were proud or contrite concerning their hetaira instincts. They were sad cases who, surrounded by cheap *littérateurs,* were talked into the belief that hetairism was the noble profession of a true woman. This nonsensical form of dissolute living does not deserve another word.

There were other women, however, likewise tired of respectability, but who dared to speak to me clearly and openly. These were timid souls, afraid of growing old, who saw their lives as thread unwinding from a spool, never more to be wound up again. They stayed awake at night wondering: Is that the way life goes by? Is that all there is to it? Pitiful women whom nature had unfortunately failed to give that anodyne of carelessness and levity which we grave-dancers so sorely need. Once one of these

creatures said to me: "Life simply must contain some one unusual and gorgeous moment, otherwise death is just sheer stupid cruelty."

An adventure! That is the answer. But we can not wait for it to come to us. We must get up and force adventure to serve us. That, however, not only requires strength, but keen intelligence, and a sensitive heart is the worst possible hindrance. Let us consider the following example:

About the year 1836 the fifteen-year-old Theresa Lachmann, a Polish-Russian Jewess, married a poor tailor. A year later she left him and went to Paris, where she soon met the pianist-virtuoso Hertz, who presented her everywhere as his wife. Hertz ruined himself in California, and Theresa lay dying in the hospital.

To Théophile Gautier, who visited her during her illness, she said: "If I ever get out of here I'll have the most beautiful house in Paris. Mark my words, Théo." Until now she had lived for men, now she would live from them. Later she is said to have declared to Taine that there were no circumstances, everyone could create his own opportunities to reach his goal.

"I once knew a woman who, though poor, had made up her mind to live in luxury. For three years she withdrew and thought it over carefully—I am that woman."

When Theresa left the hospital, she sought a far-seeing couturière, who dressed her on credit, and left the rest to her client. Theresa went to London and attracted Lord Stanley and then the Duke de Guiches and then the Duke de Grammont. Hetairism, it must be observed, was not her object, it was her means.

Finally the handsome and wealthy Marquis Aranjo de Païva, a Portuguese nobleman, brought up in England, offered her his hand and his fortune. She accepted both, and twenty-four hours after the marriage said to her hus-

band: "My dear, you have got what you wanted. I am not the woman for you. Socially I am quite impossible. I am a . . . Let us part." Thus she became a Marquise, just as she had always wanted to be and she had all the money she craved. (Païva later ruined himself and committed suicide.)

On her voyages the Marquise met Graf Henckel von Donnersmarck. So cleverly did she contrive to be whereever he was that he thought he was always where she happened to be. Finally when her breakfast in a hotel in Berlin consisted of no more than a sandwich, she gave in to him. She cost him millions every year.

Her palace in the Champs-Elysées was the most beautiful in Paris, and there Gautier, to his great delight, found also the best cuisine. Four special officers ministered to her. Emile Girardin kept her informed of political events. De Reims took care of her finances. Arsaine Houssaye, the demi-mondain, who always desired to be of the aristocracy, brought her all the gossip, while Dumont, the Beau Brummell of the table, took care of her cuisine.

Delacroix and Saint-Victor came to her house. Taine followed along with those Goncourts whose eyes made constant rapid inventories. Hohenlohe and Gambetta were frequent guests.

Many anecdotes circulated concerning her. There is the story of the young man who was mad about her and who could not give more than ten thousand francs for her favors. For these ten thousand she was willing to spare no more time than the bills themselves would take in burning. The passionate lover managed to bring twelve bills in order to extend his brief moments of glory. When the last bill was consumed and his passion along with it, he confessed that the heaps of ashes had cost him only twelve well-made photographs. For that she slapped him soundly.

After the war she conceived political aspirations like Castiglione and Mercy-Argenteau, but no one would trust her on account of her German relationship. Gambetta warned her, in utter friendliness, to leave France. She moved to a suburb of Berlin where she died early in the eighties.

She really looked like an old duchess. Though she was no beauty, she contrived to be the outstanding woman of Paris, which in the Second Empire could boast of the world's prettiest women.

No man ever loved her, and she never loved any man. But she achieved her ambition, which was to live in fabulous luxury, through the gifts of men forced to do her bidding by the power of her will and her body.

Her house in Paris was auctioned off. The new owner opened up a restaurant with private rooms, which led my friend Friedrich von Schenis to say that the building had not changed its business.

And the Count was forced to marry her in order to keep the money in the family!

Does this example awaken envy? It should not, for there is no such thing as an example for other people's lives. One cannot try this or that according to one's pleasure. No one is really master of the future, and so no one's life can be an example which we may choose to follow if we so decide.

The true adventurer never sacrifices. He makes others sacrifice to him. If ever he is forced by a greater will than his own, he finds himself thrown out of the chariot and under the wheels. And he rarely rises again.

MATA HARI

MATA HARI

On such a beautiful July day, Marguerite Gertrude, you who gave yourself the name Mata Hari, Child of Dawn, how can you look so sad? Why do you sit staring at yourself as though there were nothing more to live for? Perhaps you are tired of your present lover, the President of Berlin's police force? Or perhaps he is tired of you? Well, give him up, even as the hundred who preceded him.

Or perhaps you think that now, in July, 1914, when you are within three weeks of thirty-nine, you are too old to attract? What nonsense! Why, no one takes you for more than thirty, and many are convinced that you are scarcely twenty. The whole world, you know, believes you to be a Hindu, and everyone knows that at thirty a Hindu woman is old and decrepit.

But answer me, Marguerite Gertrude, you who were born in Leuwarden, Holland, the daughter of a father from Frisia and a mother from The Hague; tell me, poor beaten widow, who is now Europe's highest-priced courtesan; tell me, temple-dancer of Siva, worthy sister of the mystic Dewadasis, scholarly student of the Prem Sagar and the Sundara Kanda; tell me, you who bear a most intelligent head on a most wonderful body; tell me what bleak desolation holds your spirit in thralldom. Or in plain Hindustani, what louse crawls over your rose-colored liver?

It all depends upon the original point of departure. Some women enter the career of a courtesan, coming from below, others from above. That makes all the difference

in the world. On the horizon of lives entering from beneath, there glitters a crown like the very sun itself. And sometimes these creatures actually realize their golden ambition. Have not many, who were buried as queens, begun as strumpets, and reached up and up with eager hands, until their greedy fingers closed upon the golden and bejewelled circlet?

The last chapter treated of a girl who fled from a Polish ghetto and went up dizzily to a palace in the Champs-Elysées. She herself must have been astounded at her career. She did not question whether the course she adopted was right or wrong. She had only one desire,—to rule those who had once ruled her.

As soon as she had her foot planted on the first rung, she did not dare stop climbing. She was so afraid that she might sink again into the morass from which she had risen, that she thought only of holding on to that which she had gained and adding thereto.

It is quite another matter with those who, having grown up in wealthy bourgeois circles, early learned to share their environment's notions of what constitutes happiness and well-being. Even though they have never experienced it themselves, they will yet hold up the bourgeois ideals of wifehood and motherhood as the highest peaks of life. And however they may rationalize it, once some misfortune has cast them out, their blood will yearn for the old fireside peace, and they will find no comfort in cynicism, nor be able to conceal to themselves the fact that they are travelling a downward road.

These women are completely under the false impression that men are beasts lusting after their bodies. Bourgeois courtesans imagine that the hardest and heaviest sacrifice is the surrender of the body to a man whom they do not love, but who will pay. They lack the egotism of

Mata Hari

that girl from the Polish ghetto, who demanded more than mere payment, and they will never go beyond the sale of their bodies, the while they seek to stifle their pain in a wild frenzy.

Any intelligent courtesan will tell you a different story: "As to the surrender of the body, well, yes, if it ever comes to that, which is rather seldom with our type of men, there is really nothing to it. The difficult part, the real job, is to get along with a man during the other hours, to be able not only to stand his conversation and reply to it, but to bear his jokes, his views, his tastes. That is the hardest thing in the world. And no price is too high if we can manage that end of it successfully. The sexual hour! Bah, that's just an amusing bagatelle. The clown act. The moments before and after, that is what counts."

And that is where the bourgeois courtesan loses out. She has convictions of culture and taste. She will sense her false tone and that will put her off at once. Riches are unable to rouse her to greater vitality, for she has known wealth and is not dazzled by its display. When the conversation becomes serious, she keeps it so, and drops frequently into memories verging upon tears.

It is perhaps in order to avoid this that she hastens the moment of surrender, the sexual intermezzo with which she hopes to prove her own worth. Yes, her own worth, in her bourgeois mind, for she is accustomed to think of her body as the most valuable thing she has. For in her circle, the body was the pledge of love, and here she strives to convince that she loves by giving her body. But it will not work. She is disappointed again and again. She becomes ashamed of her profession, and dreams of fireside peace.

Frequently she has a daughter boarding somewhere; the child of a futile, ragged marriage. Even as Mata Hari.

Often she pretends to be an artist, to hide her true profession of courtesan. Even as Mata Hari, who danced.

Sometimes she throws herself into some mental adventurous pursuit. Even as Mata Hari, who became a spy.

One must have the naïveté of the really poor, to understand the quest for wealth as an object in itself. One must never have fingered a piece of gold, in order to be afraid of changing it. How happy are such people! The old Grandet is not plagued by that never fully answerable question: "What shall I buy with this?"

But he who thinks of money as only a means to buy that which happens to please him is showered with all the world and its contents, for everything is for sale And there is nothing that does not attract at some moment or other. Weak brains are addled at the thought, strong minds are stricken with melancholia. Some complain that one cannot live at one and the same time in the three castles one possesses.

The Scotch officer in the Colonial Service of Holland ran through his wife's large dowry, with the help of cards and liquor. He loafed around, jobless, and beat his wife. She ran away to Paris.

Duncan, dancing barefoot, was just then all the rage. But for that her own skin was too dark, and she perspired too easily. The great possibilities that had flooded her breast suddenly withered. She could not emulate Duncan's fame.

Then she recollected her three years in Java. She called herself Mata Hari, and pretended to have been an Indian temple dancer. She gave one performance at the Musée Guimet, and another in the salon of the Princess G——. The snobs went wild about her.

She danced again and again in still more intimate circles, where there were gentlemen. And they went wild,

too, but for another reason. Mata Hari was frightened. She recalled her fireside and longed for it, even though she remembered her husband's blows. A year ago she had run away, now she ran back.

Her father and her aunt procured the divorce for her. She was free of her husband and had her child, but she had also her aunt's narrow views and the deadly Philistinism of Holland's bourgeoisie to contend with. And with all that the neighbors looked askance at her, "the divorcee." It is only when away from husband, love, children, home, and all the other things, that Marguerite Gertrude MacLeod overestimated them. "Out of love" she cheerfully gave up her freedom, and purchased a husband, home and love, shelter and privacy, and of all that she had the memory of wedded life and a child.

Perhaps on that dull, dreary afternoon, she was longing for that happiness which only circumstances, through no fault of hers, had prevented her from acquiring. She still believed in that kind of happiness. Or perhaps the slowly fading beauty of her body had thrown her into a fit of despondency. Women are like that. Especially those who live off men, and of them, more particularly the ones who are conscious of growing old.

Mata Hari had studied all the theurgies of love, knew strict upbringing would not let her believe that this was a profession, much less her profession. And thus she resorted to the fiction of dance. She read herself into her part until she lived it. She read Indian writings until she was half convinced that she was the reincarnation of a bayadere. Her performance was impressively exotic.

Only now and then, the mask fell from her. At such moments, for instance, as when she sent money to her daughter in Holland. Or perhaps, when the company of man made her incapable of fooling herself into the belief

that she was celebrating the sixty-four rites of Hindu voluptuousness. And perhaps, when the President of Berlin's police force was the man, a real bayadere might, in desperation, abandon all of the sixty-four rites.

Mata Hari had studied all the theurgies of love, knew all the secrets of amulets and potions, and could recite the ritual incantations in the original; but her only reason for doing and knowing all this was the fact that the strategies of her profession were foreign to her, she was absolutely without sensuality, and could not even imitate sensuality without careful study.

A police-doctor encountered her once in a Parisian brothel, whither she had gone to study at first hand the art of her profession. That is how untalented she was. She had to study the thing just like any liberal art, in books and in brothels.

Her income was immense. Her palace at Neuilly was marvelously well-run. Her furs were famous. She did not bother with small affairs. She went after the big ones. She had the tact of a woman of the world, and wit, learning, and good taste in addition.

Her beauty was not one of those cheap varieties that are all right in private, but won't do for public exhibition. She was one of those whom one loves to be seen with. There was none of that *fille de joie* air about her. She did not insinuate herself by a temperamental display. She was neither coquettish nor frivolous. With extraordinary talent, she developed her own original style out of the given actualities of her body and her mental capabilities.

It is possible, but not certain, that she lost her heart to a poor Russian Lieutenant, fighting for France on the Belgian front. It is true that she was a nurse and tended him when he was wounded. But she may have invented her love for him in order, when she was accused of

espionage, to give evidence, to the court, that she was capable of "unselfish" love, and did not always sell her affection for money.

When her judges, who being poorly paid, no doubt paid poorly for their own extra-marital amours, scornfully questioned her high prices, Mata Hari replied cynically: "Yes, that's how high it costs, with me." Perhaps that was intended to correct the somewhat too strongly emphasized sentimental love for the Russian officer. It is true, however, that she wrote three letters before her execution, and one of the three was addressed to this man. Perhaps he was traceable. But there is no doubt whatsoever that Mata Hari earned big sums as a courtesan, and did not need the income to be made from espionage.

Mata Hari was guilty of another statement, which the court martial in 1917 held against her. She said: "The war is no reason why I should surrender my cosmopolitanism." Thus she defined the social rôle of the courtesan as the bearer of cosmopolitan thought, as the one who is imitated by all women, not only in regard to the fashion of her clothes, but also with respect to all other feminine arts.

I once sought to console her by improvising upon the theme that courtesans are of great social importance. She was sure of it. "You know," she said, "that's the reason I seek out prominent men as my lovers."

The King of Spain was one of them, and she is known to have accompanied the German Crown Prince to Schlesien, during the manœuvres which took place there. During her trial, statesmen and generals appeared among the witnesses for the defense.

"To show myself naked before many people, that . . . you understand."

Her accuser was of the opinion that the fact that the

French had not accepted her as they had accepted Isadora Duncan, and the fact that she had found a more appreciative public in Germany, were the causes of placing herself at the disposition of the Boches. If it wasn't for money—she had received, it is said, sixty thousand marks in the first two years of the war—then for revenge. Courts proceed upon a very schematic conception of psychology.

Mata Hari had absolutely no professional pride. She once ordered a stage designer to build her any kind of chimerical temple, for she herself was "only chimerical." She never assumed that attitude in front of serious people. "I shall appear naked, laden with stones, and in every way I shall manage to reap a profit."

She was thirty-eight then. Perhaps she spoke differently at twenty-five. But having aged she even reached this very un-Indian conclusion: "One must live for beautiful and glorious moments. A short intensive life is to be preferred to an old age without beauty."

She was smiling as she approached the post in the trenches of Vincennes. She refused to allow her eyes to be bandaged. She carried roses in her arms. There could be no more beautiful death for Mata Hari than the bullets of a firing squad.

She had been tortured for eight months with prison and examinations, hopes and doubts, but this cruel sickness leading to her death was an unintentional concomitant of the expectation that she had valuable information to reveal. She did nothing, however, but protest her innocence, sometimes successfully, sometimes unskilfully.

It is more comfortable to think of her as guilty. There is one strong point against her, and that is, that at the critical moment, she offered herself to the French Espionage service and received a mission. She did not carry out her orders, which consisted of a letter she was to deliver

to a French agent in the occupied city of Brussels. Four weeks later, however, the agent was executed upon the orders of the German Military Court.

It is certain that she did not become a spy for the sake of the monetary reward. Espionage was poorly paid throughout Europe. One really had to serve two masters in order to eke out a modest living. Herr König, who was chief of the German Espionage in Barcelona, paid the Frenchman, Captain Estève, no more than three hundred pesetas a month, and that man certainly accomplished great things.

The Chief sent Mata Hari's bill for eight thousand francs, which was to pay for the nights he had passed with her, to a colleague in Brussels for payment. This was an economical and practical way of having the State pay for one's private pleasures, but it served Mata Hari ill, for the bill was intercepted, and the dancer's simple explanation was nowhere credited.

The judges considered the sum entirely too high to be merely a prostitute's fee, and as payment for espionage it was also enormous,—the judges knew very well how poorly paid that business was,—so they gave Mata Hari's services as a spy stupendous importance, just to account for the figure of the bill. One judge declared that her activities had cost France more than a division of men.

On the appointed October morning she asked if the weather were nice, and upon receiving an affirmative reply, she requested her light coat. Why were executions always carried out so early in the morning? One would be ever so much more disposed in the afternoon, say at three, after breakfast. She carried roses in her arms and smiled. When, after the firing, she was given a final coup de grace in the temple, a young infantry soldier collapsed.

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—ESSANDESS